

## deadbeats & gloryhunters

there's a girl, a tall girl, with eyes like honeycomb & jasmine.  
sometimes she blows cigarette smoke in your face in the break room,  
& you call that love. not because it is, but because you want it to be,  
because you're so goddamned lonely,  
so goddamned unable to handle the ocean roar  
in your ears when you're alone. you tell yourself  
the ash in your lungs is a kiss goodnight,  
& you write poems about the smoke tendrils whispering off her lips,  
how beautiful they are,  
like the aching arms of god  
you want them to be. one night, you're tired, so very tired,  
your eyes heavy as water. you forget  
where you are, in the break room at a walmart  
at 2:30 in the morning. you leave your notebook unattended  
on the table, left out for anyone in the world to see,  
& one of your coworkers picks it up. he reads the poems you wrote  
about the girl with honeycomb & jasmine in her eyes. you panic  
when you realize what just happened, because the boy  
who just picked up your notebook,  
he's a cruel boy, with eyes like shotguns & razorwire.  
he buys you razorblades on your birthday  
so you *can do the job right the next time,*  
*you fucking freak,*  
& you can't believe that you aren't one,  
can't believe you deserve to be anything.  
some days you don't even try to hide  
the angry marks on your arm, like your skin is a test  
where you got every question wrong. one night,  
there's a box-cutter with a brand new blade, a stack of cardboard  
boxes begging to feel its tooth.  
you dig in, but something's wrong.  
the fiber's too gnarled  
& you can't seem to cut clean.  
you push, hard as you can, feel the stiff tangle of glue give way,  
& there's blood on the floor,  
the blade half an inch in your wrist,  
but you don't feel it.  
the shift manager's in your ear, angry  
because he has to take you to the hospital.  
there's a janitor who'll forever hold it against you  
for staining his clean, clean floor,  
& there's everyone you work with  
& their hostile eyes glaring,  
knowing this was coming all along. there's that cacophony,  
all those ghosts reminding you of your destiny for failure.  
& there's another blade,  
& there's a bottle of pills,  
a fifth of vodka, a hospital visit,  
two weeks of inpatient  
while your whole family prays for you

