

i found myself at the bottom of a swimming pool

Charlotte Youngman

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forgetting myself felt like frosted rain—

i find that i cannot pick myself out in a family portrait
i might as well light on fire,
let the smoke distort and melt a new face,
give character to a body that never had it before

i want to feel
more than a ghost trapped in a whiskey bottle on the bottom shelf,
mulled over and passed up for something better,
more than a tuesday afternoon on a cold park bench,
praying out loud to a fragile god,
or my older brother,
or a street vendor selling roses down the block,

i write apology notes to my parents in my diary at night,
my stomach hasn't stopped hurting since the summer of 2013
i fear i will never get used to the guilt that sits—

at the bottom of the pool.
my eyes burn and i miss air,
but when i look in the deep end,

i see myself looking right back.