

Goldfish Are Ordinary

At the pet store on Court Street,
I search for the perfect fish.
The black moor, the blue damsel,
cichlids and neons. Something
to distract your sadness, something
you don't need to love you back.
Maybe a goldfish, the flaring tail,
orange, red-capped, pearled body,
the darting translucence? *Goldfish
are ordinary*, the boy selling fish
says to me. I turn back to the tank,
all of this grace and brilliance,
such simplicity the self could fail
to see. In three months I'll leave
this city. Today, a chill in the air,
you're reading Beckett fifty blocks
away, I'm looking at the orphaned
bodies of fish, undulant and gold fervor.
Do you want to see aggression?
the boy asks, holding a purple beta fish
to the light while dropping handfuls
of minnows into the bowl. He says
*I know you're a girl and all
but sometimes it's good to see.*
Outside, in the rain, we love
with our hands tied,
while things tear away at us.