

# I Looked at You and I Said Yes

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Winner of the 2020 Poetry Prize

february mia is still disappeared

gone  
last summer goned for weeks

for weeks  
before i learned

sad in austin the same  
aching face

weather aching face  
texas spread sea-

gull dead learned  
by infinite

google tower my eye-  
lashes scrape the clouds  
no tears

unanchored. mia  
who is lumi is miahana i knew her  
younger than me is forever

14th or 16th street after our sephora workshfts  
would conspire vent  
by windowfront chicken and rice

steamtables how to get ours  
a raise more gratis  
scheduling that wasn't so fucked.

at flatiron we scammed mugged  
sold beauty were trans  
were same but different 2014 before i knew

radiant orchid our faces became the center of our lives  
became even toned evenly thick wingéd  
you could sell eyeliner to a cat  
(i could sell lipstick to Plato)

on the floor together we doubled  
semblance, kissers twinned in the glass,  
doubled everything but sales

we said fuck that fuck luis josh  
jason the no talent new manager  
hired from outside her concealer looks

bad    orange    thick  
what does she know that we don't  
when will they recognize young artistry

the colors they lacked we slung ourselves  
can't they see how hot-vant garde we are  
you    smoked out by nars in your ultrarare chartreuse moods

asking *honey do you feel free?* head tilting    laughing  
sharing blunders with gen-z gurus and vloggers  
your hands-on-shoulders approach *girl, i'm here for you*    cut

across the floor i listened    sore-footed zoned far    by the bored end of fragrance  
so over florabotanica    viva la juicy    but slinging stella cobalt wings  
nonetheless    they didn't want us

talking    didn't want us giggling    comingled    conferring  
like who got fired (and why)    and whose ass to kiss (fuck that)  
*we should unionize* i think out loud    hands cold

we're gagging at starbucks weeks after i'm wrung through  
black friday 34th street    my skin and mind  
heavy as dark wet canvas

what do they have against our joy  
swapping my gratis with you that ho ho free shit you love  
like christmas each plummy pressed powder

more than i ever mia  
your mouth went wide eyes liven  
for lancome marc jacobs the scarce dior

i said *here have my mascara i don't use it*  
*oh, too fancy for clinique?*  
complaining brazen each time she gets her frappé remade for free lumi

i'm not embarrassed  
i'm impressed  
though once by union the man asked for change you sang back britney's "betta  
work bitch" then i was embarrassed scared as we ran from his shouting  
fuming after us

i'm not embarrassed  
i'm sorry lumi  
i don't know how to write a poem like this.  
i wanted to do a good job  
i worked there for months before you arrived  
beelining when you stepped in  
dressed in black polo on lunch break  
the home depot across the street made you dress like a man  
they gave you 20 minutes to eat  
and paid you 9 dollars to the hour  
*I knew you were a faggot so I went straight to you*  
you later told me, cackling as we cleaned our brushes backroom  
that first time we spoke no bullshit on primers or liners  
*is it okay for someone like me here?*  
*can I be okay here?*  
you asked me then  
you demanded