

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 winged
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 florobotanica 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