

Caroline Cabrera**Distance Valentine // Transition Spool**

A desire to be bright and flawless
to transcend, lemon-like, from the pile
of my junk. I walk into the house,
see my empty carcasses, and sigh.
I fall back into my mess; this brain
deserves no thoughts. This body produces
no action. To be, instead, a genuine
lemon, powerful in sense. Lemon I rub
into my skin and hair. Lemon that burns.
Lemon cooking, preserving, lemon over
the embattled stench of decay. I wish
to dispense with metaphors: something died
in our house and you pulled it out,
flattened and oily, and I repaid you
with a single gardenia, the loveliest I know.
In these moments we are most ourselves.
You: practical, sacrificing. Me: mostly aesthetic.
Me: removed. You remove yourself for months
at a time and I become a day to day machine,
a body churning. I produce and produce
but most is rain water. You return.
With citrus we wash everything clean
and return to ourselves. We prepare
for renewal. We point towards home
and choose it.

Caroline Cabrera

Caroline Cabrera is author of the poetry collection *Saint X*, winner of the Hudson prize and forthcoming from Black Lawrence Press in January 2018. Her previous collections include *The Bicycle Year*, *Flood Bloom*, and the chapbook *Dear Sensitive Beard*. She teaches with Innovations for Learning, a nonprofit focused on improving primary literacy, as well as teaching creative writing workshops with the O, Miami Poetry Foundation. She lives in Fort Lauderdale.

