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The Year without a Summer

by Mia Sundby

You stick like sweat, like Aperol fizzing on
my lips; like the taste of Purdey's to wash down
the pills I take for Anxiety; you stick like Summer.
It's been Summer since May. It's February now and
I am sitting by a pool, my striped bikini top holding me up
more than the pills —I'd hoped to be healed by the sun,
you see, and I'd hoped to do it without you. You stick
like sweat on a hot, humid day, when I stepped outside in
twenty-seven and thought that a thick cotton shirt would
be fine.

Have you ever reached a hand up your shirt, the tips of
your fingers to lick at your back, to taste the running pool

of heat that used to be
your skin? You stick like sweat. Like the gross fascination
of touching your skin to find only liquid, when you thought
that you would find flesh. I'm living in Summer, endlessly.
It didn't occur that that's where I met you until I stepped out of
seasons and into the sun, into nights of thirty and mornings of
heat-soaked decks. I didn't think that you would stick, but
I find I'm not surprised.
Does it count as a year without Summer, if it's not you by
my side?