

“Athazagoraphobia (Fear of Being Ignored)” by [Jamaal May](#)

I used to bury plum pits between houses. Buried
bits of wire there too. Used to bury matches
but nothing ever burned and nothing ever thrived
so I set fire to a mattress, disassembled a stereo,
attacked flies with a water pistol, and drowned ants
in perfume. I pierced my eyebrow, inserted
a stainless steel bar, traded that for a scar in a melee, [
, swerved into traffic while unbuttoning my shirt—

There is a woman
waiting for me to marry her or forget her name
forever—whichever loosens the ribbons from her hair.
I fill the bathtub for an enemy, lick the earlobe
of my nemesis. I try to dance like firelight
without setting anyone ablaze. I am leaning over
the railing of a bridge, seeing my face shimmer
on the river below—it’s everywhere now—

Look for me
in scattered windshield beneath an overpass,
on the sculpture of a man with metal skin grafts,
in patterns on mud-draggled wood, feathers
circling leaves in rainwater—look. Even the blade
of a knife holds my quickly fading likeness
while I run out of ways to say I am here.