

# The Prairie Light Review

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Volume 46  
Number 1 *Fall 2023*

Article 12

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Fall 12-1-2023

## Examination

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### Recommended Citation

Matlock, Elise (2023) "Examination," *The Prairie Light Review*. Vol. 46: No. 1, Article 12.  
Available at: <https://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol46/iss1/12>

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the august sun overwhelms,  
silently

grape popsicles sting the inside  
of soft cheeks  
and sticky fingers reach  
for a faded door inside

a familiar laundry room,  
machines rattling, dull blue tiles,  
a crevice under the old countertop  
for two small bodies to curl into

we embrace the buzzing of  
fluorescent lights like dewdrops  
embrace morning

our hands press the worn patterns  
on the floor and uncover  
a tattered box, a capsule of time

cotton candy lip gloss,  
frayed stuffed animals,  
flimsy polaroids  
of a forgotten, buried time

our blurry fingerprints  
trace the past –  
*does your chest feel this heavy too?*  
*does your popsicle taste this bitter?*

my vision turns to static,  
a thick, sour sensation –  
i yearn to linger  
a bit longer.

but she leaves, gritted teeth and  
a shrinking reflection of “keep in  
touch”

she leaves me with the idea that  
goodbyes are impermanent  
when really they are the most  
solid thing i’ve ever felt

i say i’ll miss you but  
my words are hollow –  
*how did we ever*  
*have anything to say?*

i hoped it would be us in the end  
but we grew up and now  
my fingers are numb  
and my teeth ache

i think about it often –  
*do you?*  
*do you wish we had more time?*

but she has forgotten.  
she doesn’t hear me –  
i am speaking to  
an empty room

now the lip gloss has dried out.  
the teddy bear’s threads unravel  
and  
the places we stand, giggling, in  
the photos  
don’t exist anymore

but i remember it all  
and i have nowhere to put it down

*please don’t be a stranger*