

ALISON PRINE

To My Younger Self

I know you less and less,
but forgive your miscalculations,

the distances you thought you'd travel,
and your terrible, naive desire to be good.

Time grows between us
with a mechanical agency.

You would be shocked to hear
I found a photograph in my desk

of a girl your age who died by her own hand
using a plastic bag, duct tape and a rope.

From her I learned the inequality
of a question mark and a period.

If you ask if I loved that girl,
I would say, there is not enough science,

no sharp enough serrations, nor length
in all the highways to answer you.

I threw that picture away. Two days later
I emptied my trash and saw her face

staring up at me, stuck at the bottom
of the empty basket.

What we do not to be forgotten.
It's back in my desk now.

And I am saying this to you
because she would want it.