

1

What do I
become laying
horizontal as possible

no light
 songs
 smell
 taste

 no touch

black mask, eye patch
hearing I become
window side, what's left of
a dawn chorus

I become the bird
I become the wind
I become the leaves that the wind runs through
the twig snapping under a foot
I become the tree

I become the metal of that plane
 always flying by in D-flat
the 30,000-foot frost, metal belly full of sun
I become the parkway's coasting cars
 I become the car alarm
 (((minor second, [[[minor third]]], { { {
half-diminished7 chord in 2nd inversion}}})))))

I yearn for a becoming less constructed
 the construction two houses down
 the staple gun, the buzz saw
 the developer, far far away
I become the cop car
their impatient faux-emergencies
 approaching that
 same red
 light

I become the facade
the abstractions behind my eyelids

the purifier whir≈% the bathroom fan the hot
little razors
in my throat

I become a cancellation
I become a string of text messages
the colleague who says “you'll be fine!” — I
become fine
the student's parent who says “no worries!”
and I say nothing
The only person masking with me at work is
the only one who
says “I'm
sorry”

—————)—————

2
I become everywhere
I went for two weeks
a coughing volunteer>
<the packed train at 28th Street
15<>blonde><white<>women><wearing<
>similar>*<black<>dresses><with<
similar><black<>purses
one man eyeing my pink mask><>*<><a
coughing opera audience
the unimaginative infrastructure<><*>no
filtration<*><>*>no precaution
*your safety is important to—
 <*>the us<*>the*>*<parts<*>the*>
<*>p*er<*>*>m*||*li*on*>*>*/

I become what everybody thinks
feeling good means

I become a dark line running through it
 / a social web – on a test strip =
the /sunbeam/
the _bed linen_
the | election | hall

I become what upends lives

/ become a problem

/ become all the times I'm made to feel foolish for taking care of myself

/ become what is gaslit

I become the first year this all started__
its comforting undeniability_____

oh I become undeniable_____

I become relief _ _ _ _ _ * _ _ _

I become a level of still that I have wanted for a long, long, long time

I become all of the foliage I haven't watered

the aching wood

the predisposed

a collection of letters

the liver,

kidney damage

I become the cobalt in my phone during the telehealth consult

the artificial intelligence taking

notes in my last doctor's appointment

the space where the doctor's mask should have been

I become the therapy speak

[[the bulldozing

—[[I become what is bulldozed

]]—...what builds myself back up

I become antibody grateful

I become all of those who understand

I become all of the misunderstandings

I become the

silence

between a reality I cannot accept

and a nicety I

must uphold

I become a five-year memory trove of
personal precautions

the nation insisting I forget them

the slant maintained

by the floor

———\|*//———

3

I become the neighbor's children, the crowded play date
the little ones who we demand
be infected with this*

{“it's—}

over*and*}over*and*}over*and*}
over*and*}over*

I become their retroactive sense of betrayal,
distrust, two decades from now

I become the seeds waiting for
anything other than a drought

I become the blue jay watching them
his muted nose dive out of the tree
before he spreads his wings `

I become what so many say is
not there

I become everybody's individual =comforts=
I become what =I= =imagine= it would be
=like=

to ≠no≠t =be=

at =*peace*=

with your ==*own*==

thoughts

a =*convenient*=ly reductive =kind= of *=optimism=*
=like=

wringing a hand

to ≠refuse≠ its lending

a puppet

for **something**

=I= ≠do≠n't even *=believe=* in

{{{I become the strobe lights behind my
eyes when I lay back down}}}

{{{I become the empty turtle shell}}}

{{{I become the empty}}}

———}———)

4

I become a lost week of work before
rent is due

I become a care package
the gestures that hold me together
a beneficiary of the help I once gave

I become thankful to know whether I have it*
or not {"it's—}

what used to drive by every eight minutes
\\\\^***\\

I become a waterfall of question marks
ham-fistedly thrown from a slingshot

 V ` ' , I become
 the ground I hoped to land on]]—...

I become a log of
 gentle inhales
 forced e x h a l e s through a mask

I become the =niceties=

I become the =delusions=

I become =easy= to work with

I become all that my body is trying to tell me

I become a revelation that would be
better placed in a softer world

I become the desire to change paths

I become the desire to forge a new one

 I become the questions etched
 around my failures

 I become the amnesia looming
 around my victories

——/=*=/——

5

the quietest spring I've ever known
the loudest summer I've ever known
all I'll have to sanitize later

I become what was crossed
what is so preventable

/ become text,u're?
I become the sand where the line crossed you—,"—
 where your —>baseline>—,"shifted"—
the place the world—moved—and
 you—,"stayed"—put
and where the world—removed—and
 —I—stayed—,"put"

I become the unviability of dozens of rooms
I once wanted to be in
I become =your choice=
—[[I become a choice]]
—...

I become a tone set
a cross section of a piece I will never write
 "*music brings people #together*="

how /bright/
it is when I
open m • y • eyes

——§——

8
I become all the mindlessness
a point in a series of points
truth at its post•
 my honorary doctorate* in revisiting

I become what's underneath
the projections cast onto my body
I become the ankle-cutting fatigue
heavy with obligation
 I become a countdown

I become whichever plant out there would surely
help me, right now

I become a pinball among pinballs:::::::::::
:::::::::::jostled to and fro through this city
:::*a swarm more of wasps than of wishes*:::

hot-orange-like Bittersweet root
Thistle^we^pulled^like^serrated

chalked up^ talked-up^-like Paper Mulberry
shoveled^-bulby-like Star of Bethlehem

red as choked-out Virginia Creeper
puffy as Bishop's Elder in /summer/
sprawling as Himalayan Blackberry
just as infamous, as prized
as the /sunlight/-fed
/English Ivy/, feeding
Starlings with its berries

as thoughtful as any stone
I become all that I cannot
accept
I become what trillions worth of propaganda
cannot brainwash•••
what so many have become
heavy with obligation
a lighthouse like them /*\

I become the space between our
comprehension} _ ≈ %***% ≈ _ {and our
courage

I become a fly
that
taps•
the
window
[*]