

# Carissa

## Sun Kil Moon

Oh Carissa, when I first saw you, you were a lovely child  
And the last time I saw you, you were fifteen and pregnant and running wild  
I remember wondering, could there be a light at the end of your tunnel?  
But I left Ohio then and had pretty much forgotten all about you  
I guess you were there some years ago at a family funeral  
But you were one of so many relatives I didn't know which one was you  
Yesterday morning I woke up to so many 330 area code calls  
I called my mom back and she was in tears and asked had I spoke to my father?  
Carissa burned to death last night in a freak accident fire  
In her yard in Brewster her daughter came home from a party and found her  
Same way as my uncle, who was her grandfather  
An aerosol can blew up in the trash, goddamn, what were the odds?  
She was just getting ready to go to her midnight shift as an RN in Wadsworth  
And she vanished up in flames like that but there had to be more to her life's worth  
Everyone's grieving out of their minds, making arrangements and taking drugs  
But I'm flying out there tomorrow because I need to give and get some hugs  
Cause I got questions that I'd like to get answered  
I may never get them, but Carissa, I've got to know how did it happen?  
Carissa was thirty-five, you don't just raise two kids and take out your trash and die  
She was my second cousin, I didn't know her well at all but it don't mean that I wasn't  
Now to find some poetry, to make some sense of this, to find a deeper meaning  
In this senseless tragedy, O Carissa, I'll sing your name across every sea  
Were you doing someone else's chores for them?  
Were you just killing time, finding things to do all by your lonesome?  
Was it even you who mistakenly put flammables in the trash?  
Was it your kids just being kids? If so, the guilt they will carry around forever  
Well I'm going out there to get a look at the landscapes  
To get a look at those I'm connected by blood and see how it all may have shaped me  
Well I'm going out there though I'm not really needed  
I'm just so broken up about it, how is it that this sad history repeated?  
I'll return to Ohio, to the place I was spawned  
Going to see where I hung with my cousins and played with them in the snow and fished in their pond  
Going to see how they've grown, visit some graves and say, "Hey, I've missed you"  
Going to find out as much as I can about my little second cousin Carissa  
Gonna go to Ohio, where I was born  
Got a 10:45 AM flight, I'm leaving tomorrow morn  
Going to see my aunts and uncles, my parents and sisters  
Mostly I'm going to pay my respects to my little second cousin Carissa  
Going to Ohio, where I feel I belong  
Ask those who know the most about Carissa  
For it is her life and death that I am helplessly drawn  
Carissa was thirty-five, raised kids since she was fifteen

years old and suddenly died

Next to an old river, fire pit, oh there's gotta be more than that to it

She was only my second cousin but it don't mean that I'm not here for her or that I wasn't

Meant to give her life poetry, or to make sure her name is known across every city

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