Enter the bathroom. Close the door behind you, lock it. Stare at yourself in the mirror. Is that you?
Try and catch the mirror in a mistake. Keenly observe the eyes. Blink when they don’t. Count the hairs on your head, but keep your peripheral on one of your fingernails. Does it twitch? Does it curl in ever so slightly, scrapping the keratin against the ceramic? Is that your nail scratching the sink?
Lean into the mirror, and exhale. Let the air in your lungs cloud your face. And, before the dew on the mirror fades, write your name in the moisture.
Look at your name.
Read it.
Spell it out. Out loud. Say it all at once.
Feel the syllables in your mouth.
Recognize them as your own. Understand that it’s your name.
Keep staring into the fog until it’s face again.
Is that you? Does that face fit your name?
Look at your forehead. See all the dimples, and bumps that make it yours. The pimples that will come and go. The dent above your nose that won’t. Trace along to just off the center of your eye, where the pupil meets cornea. Say hello to your brain, and try to make out the rods from the cones.
Pick out a freckle, and try, really try, to remember if it was there three years ago. What part of your face is it that people remember about you? Is it that little notch in your eyebrow whose existence you’ve done nothing to encourage, yet exists anyways? Is it the space from your chin to your lips, your lips to your nose, your nose to your hairline? Which part of you is you?
Press down the hair on one side of your face. Is that still you?
Now the other side. Still you?
Run the tap, wet your hands, slick all your hair back and look in the mirror. Who is it that stares back?
Grab a clump of hair and try your damnedest to make a ponytail. Cover one ear; cover both. Close your left eye and stare at yourself sideways. Suck your cheeks in; make your face long. Put fingers over your eyebrows. Still you? Still you? Still you?
Try to turn yourself into an Italian greaser. Give a punk rocker look a go. Let your hair fall over your
Is That You

eyes; tuck it neatly behind your ears.
  How much has to change until it isn’t still you?
  Take off your shirt, let it fall it your feet. Stare at your chest.
  Would you still be you if you lost five pounds? Gained five pounds?
  Tap the bottom of your breast with the flat of your thumb. Count how many mississippis it takes for it to come to stop jiggling. Do you like that number? What number would you rather it be?
  Strike a pose; flex your muscles. Hold up the world like Atlas. Take the tiger’s stance. Pretend that you’re Arnold Schwarzenegger. Put on a Bruce Lee. Give Michelle Yeoh a whirl. Put on as many different faces as you can think of, anything but your own. Look into the mirror and see Adonis, Hercules, Persephone, Venus, whoever the hell you want. Convince yourself that you can see them instead of you.
  Lean in over the counter. Place your hands on either side of the sink. Feel the small drops of water that travel across your shoulders and down your back. Relax your shoulders. Unclench your jaw. Don’t make a face. Look into the mirror. Do you recognize yourself?
  Is that you?
  Take the rest of your clothes off. Hop into the shower.
  Let the water run hot; rub it into your skin as deep as you can.
  Forget what you saw in the mirror. Close your eyes, turn your brain off. Don’t turn it back on until the water turns cold.
  Careful stepping out of the shower; make fists with your toes as you step onto the bathmat. Wrap the towel around yourself, grab your clothes, catch a glimpse of the mirror.
  Say hello to the faded, fogged-out outline.
  Is that you?