Elegy In The Absence Of

Erica Bernheim

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview

Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
ELEGY IN THE ABSENCE OF

By the second day, cheating becomes the maiden, easier than playing honestly burnt bones against dishonest bones who think *everything* means the *world*, fiercely grasping at the most hapless of weeds.

If, by the twenty-nine-hundredth day, love continues following rules, surrender becomes impossible. Nine years of news, of the same thoughts, the reports, bug-eyed and tender, evil and hot, a *see* with no saw, a language for robots, a series of ragged readings. Something is coming to an end. The gift of assignments has no need for a future, for a threat, or for redemption. The overtextured air around the people stays white. There is nothing left to say. Names will not be remembered. Lives have made no difference. Everything is game for reconsideration: the heads of Renaissance painters jousting tumors from lips to bones, unlucky unlucky unlucky unlucky, since 1530, since January, since the end, since love has never been enough, since everything is a question. Try catching a tumbling birdcage, bouncing from bottom to top, following the path of a runaway resident, a coop flung by the bird, the nuisance of belonging to a camp.
that advocates the enclosures of love: closets, blinded and folded, terror at dawn, and maybe.

Life is worth a mouthful of blood. 
Pretend things are happening now.