

# New Poetry by Aidan Gowland



René Magritte, Not  
to Be Reproduced,  
1937

## Breathless

If you say "I am not a monster"  
Into the mirror and turn around three times  
A better version of yourself will start to take root in your  
heart.

If some nights you cannot make your mouth say the words,  
If you cannot make your lips make the sound,  
It is okay to say "I am not *always* a monster".

If your friend tells you that you need to forgive yourself  
Before you are consumed by the weight of your own actions  
It is okay to drink until you believe them.

If you have pushed all your friends away and are standing on  
the edge  
of a bridge and a voice in your head says 'Don't jump'  
That voice is your friend  
and it is okay to listen.

To the Woman Who Finds My Ex

You will find him shaking on the couch  
With his hair plastered to his forehead  
And his body covered in sweat.

He will say

*Help me*

But he won't want your help.

You will think of the words

*Addiction*

*Overdose*

*User*

But you will stop short of death.

He will glow in the dark.

He will take pleasure in his pain,

Smear it over his life with a spatula

And call it impasto,

Call it progress,

Call it hope.

He'll say the drug is the only love that he believes in,  
The only love that hasn't let him down.

You will think of the words

*Betrayal*

*Ungrateful*

*Sacrifice*

But you will stop short of leaving.