

# AUNT CHLOE

2020 ISSUE YEAR

Zain Murdock

september 22 and i haven't been the same since

*oof.*

haven't  
done this  
in a while—

last time i said

*oof*

Julia had to ask what i meant i said

damn

i don't know like

*oof*

like you make the sound  
with your lips like  
you're hitting something  
soft

like a mattress

like a hand

like black velour sweatpants,

*oof,*

you make the noise  
start out loud,  
argumentative  
then you get real quiet  
so as not to offend  
the offender,

*oof,*

you say *oof* to soften  
the landing  
of the hurt, *oof,*

maybe if Julia could poke around  
in my brain with a machine  
she could see what lobe  
lights up when the sound  
leaves my mouth, *oof,*

she shakes her head with that  
sad smile therapists do when  
they don't understand or  
they understand too much—

i think life is better conveyed  
through onomatopoeia, so  
don't be offended,  
my tongue can't shape  
words dictionary friendly

enough for you  
my only request  
is that you just remain  
silent

as i find  
them

*oof—*

if

i find them.