

The Easiest Way to Ruin Your Birthday

by Teri Coyne

In the morning
think of all the people who love you best
the ones who have been the net
cast softly on top of the challenges
your long and mostly happy life have tossed you

think of the loyalty
the friendship
the nights spent listening

think of the songs left on your answering machine
children shouting more than singing
fighting each other to be the first to say "Happy Birthday"
and of the packages
and cards that make you laugh so hard you wonder
how they know so much
when you try so hard to hide everything

when you are done
forget them all
and focus on the one
who will let you down
the call that will not come
the gift that will not be given

Let what isn't there
snuff out what is

this is easiest way