

BRIANNA LOW

P.A.I.N.

We target the Sackler family, who manufactured and pushed Oxycontin, through the museums and universities that carry their name.

—Prescription Addiction Intervention Now (sacklerpain.org)

When I think of the museum, it's the protestors I remember most.
They marched through the lobby, shouting and singing,
they lay themselves on the floor and crossed their arms
over their chests. There was something lovely about them,
a stillness. Their bodies were scattered with fake money stained with blood.
Someone threw big fistfuls into the air, and it swirled around us like confetti.
My boyfriend was addicted to heroin then, but the one thing
didn't seem to have anything to do with the other,
so I never brought it up. He loved taking baths.
Get in, he'd say, and sometimes I would, laying my body on top of his,
the water pouring onto the floor. He didn't own any towels,
so he'd dry us off with old t-shirts. He was so poor.
He had no sheets, just a sleeping bag he laid on top of an old mattress.
When I found out he was dead, I drove to the museum,
though I didn't work there anymore. I wanted to walk through the doors
and lay myself down. I wanted it to be public. A public grief.
He used to drag his mattress from room to room for somewhere to sit.
He would pull it into the kitchen for me when he cooked dinner.
Sometimes I would reach out from where I was lying in bed
as he stood at the stove frying vegetables, and touch his ankle.