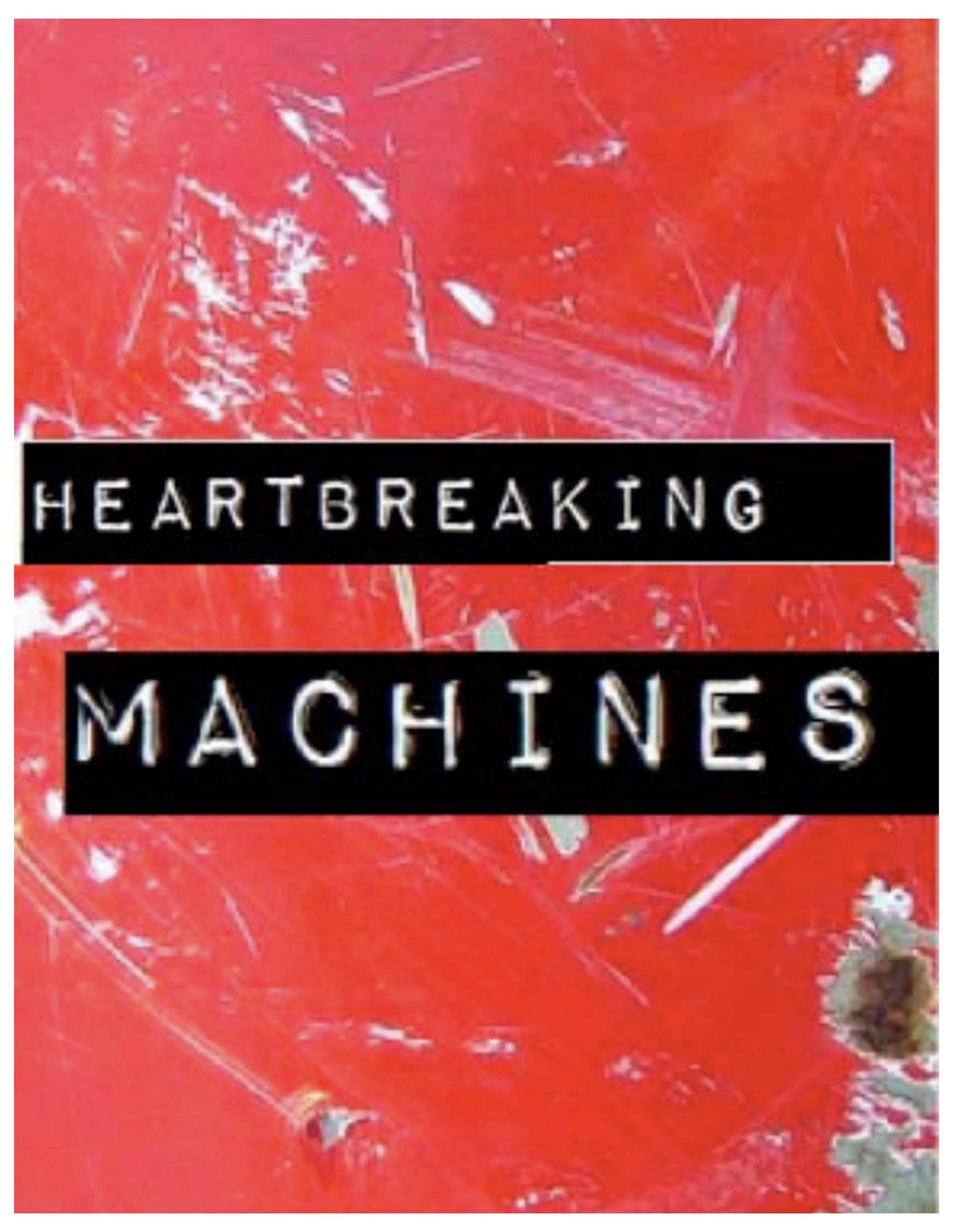
The image features a vibrant red background with numerous white, scratch-like marks and streaks scattered across it. A solid black horizontal bar is positioned in the upper-middle section, containing the word "HEARTBREAKING" in a white, monospace-style font.

HEARTBREAKING

The image features a vibrant red background with numerous white, scratch-like marks and streaks scattered across it. A solid black horizontal bar is positioned in the lower-middle section, containing the word "MACHINES" in a white, monospace-style font.

MACHINES

HEARTBREAKING
MACHINES

poems by

GINA MYERS &
NATE PRITTS

HOW TO TALK ABOUT ENTROPY

Sit her down & demonstrate the spiraling

from this one thing into this
nothing now. Tell him how everything

in a closed system becomes less

certain. Do you feel dissipated when the sun shocks
morning bright? Dispersed, dew on dandelions

growing like these empty vocatives

naming up the colors to an overwhelming
height. Closed & closing in on myself,

I'm this broken process reaching

from our fading into a new uncertainty.
The road wide open & what lies around

the bend cannot be seen. Tell him

it's all right. Tell her she'll be okay.
Say that time arrows us past the dreams

we can't sleep through, waking up to kiss

on contact. The stars still glowing.
Say that tomorrow is something new.

I WOULD RATHER HOLD A POEM THAN HOLD A HAND

My hand grasping. My poem full of gorgeous
terror is now ours. Like my warm breath freezing

on my scarf, early morning February & the cold
that I feel is something I feel. My mind is blank

snow, a blanket of snow to lie down in: winter sleep,
alone & restless. This is my reckless, this is my life

gone tragic, a choice that I'm making everyday—
though knowing it's done by choice doesn't make it easier.

I'd say sorry if I was. I'm five kinds of ravaged, I'm
protecting this savage love by whispering goodbyes

into poems & scattering them like birdseed. This ground
all covered in hush, my farewells sinking in slush.

This is why I hurt you. This is why I'll do it again.

THERE'S A LOT OF EXPLODING GOING AROUND

Just this morning, for example. And a minute ago, a tiny death like the calamitous bloom of a flower unfolding. Even endings can be monumental. The last time can be as memorable as the first. Except when it's not & the past that blew up simply blew away

like crumpled paper, an ash from a cigarette. Spark then drift instead of flash & burn. I want some blood, a sign of life—something I can taste on my lip. Something I can hear, like my name the way you said it before we wrecked:

clear. There's clarity before the storm, the calm knowledge of catastrophe on the horizon. Maybe if we can see what's coming instead of heading full speed into the darkness. Maybe a bright blast to cast stark those shadows reminding us what we left & why.

The explosions happen daily & all around us. Thanks, at least, for this temporary but honest destruction, this flare, these remnants propelling us further apart 'til we're almost forgotten except for that embedded shrapnel sting. Except for a scar we can't explain.

MONTHS & MONTHS OF WHATEVER IT WAS

Squinting at distance, there's no contour to this
shape slipping in and out of view, amorphous, alive.
I have given a name to my pain & it is static, caught

with other debris in the chain link fence. I have
given flame to this rage & called it empty.
Tossing rocks at the windows of an abandoned warehouse,

I'm savoring trajectory, the delicate arc. I'm waiting for crash.
A strange fascination with things that are broken.
I'm preoccupied with perspective, this burgeoning break,

sliver of time in constant slow-motion replay that I need
to remember. That I want to forget. As if knowing
your enemy defeats your enemy & naming your defeat

is like being thrown out of yourself lonely. A stone
aching across the sky for some resounding new shatter.
But this is not how I imagined things would be.

I HAVE BEEN ENJOYING THE RELINQUISHING

But what comes next? My chest is an emptying
box of flowers, each petal a trinket, a tiny memory
of what was & what I can't hold in any more
so I'm letting it all go. Birds lifting from my heart,
feathers beating, frantic for distance. There is this wanting.

Wanting perspective. Wanting to cut this piece of flesh
from arm, to offer it as evidence, bloody. This body
is still mine even if I do not want it. I do not want
this body alone. I'm writing a list to keep track
of the ways I've sabotaged the seasons from bursting

cleanly one to the next, the ways I've torn myself
from myself & destroyed everything in my path.
Ask me again about this settling wreckage.
Everything is fucking swell. This has been a model year.
I have watched it rise & bust, the crashes all incredible.

I AM SORRY FOR ALL THE BAD STUFF

But I cannot stop it. Sunrise in your eyes early
morning & that light - I can't stop it. Remember
those times I said don't, but we kept on?
I raised my voice in song & you heard battering,

a barrage of snow. Icy fracture. Now there is nothing
I can do. A landscape & this still life. Pretend

that tomorrow will somehow be different & better.
Pretend that different & better will somehow still be me
& you & this broken crescendo reconstituted.
If only I could close my eyes & sleep this all away,

find out the words to unchoose this madness.
But the madness never stops. It's a fire unraveling,

light separated from heat, something held close
like a knife pressed to flesh. This shouldn't hurt.
This shouldn't hurt for long. I am sorry
that this sorry goes on & on, sorry that it's only pain

that quickens my breath & reminds me I'm alive.
But I'm not sorry as the bad stuff flares & burns.

I THOUGHT IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE END

Blue afternoon, sky fading to dusk, it's me
that I'm left with. Early signs of spring
creeping in; first the birds in the morning,

then this big dumb hope like a sun
in the sky depending, the soft clouds hanging.
This doesn't have to be the end. Please

don't let it end like this. Driving, the windows
cracked after months of snow, I'm revising
the memories, needing to not need you anymore,

needing something else to occupy this empty
space. I'm invested in this melt but patches
of snow remind me it's cold. I saw it coming.

I can't pretend to have been blind to this when
it was stitched into my own actions. Intervals
of desire & then a blind thrashing toward my

lovely alone self; I ripped the sutures because
I wanted. Because it hurts so good. I'm both
glad & I'm not that you're gone. I'm only sorry

that I didn't leave sooner. I could have looked
at you on the very first day & said I think
that this might already be the end of us both.

STRONG HEARTS

My heart hasn't exploded yet
but it's vacant & fragile, this hollow

red beating has taken a beating.
Sometimes the too much is really too much,
a forever of wanting, & sometimes

the too much is never enough.
So let me love you right up

& let's forget about this stupid argument,
let's forget the way I push

& the way I am pushed. Electrically
living, I'll stand next to the risk;

a high voltage shock is just what
I need. O my girl, O stupid boy: sucker up

for this kiss, a flower on your lips.
I'm ravaged & flattered & ready to love.

SELF-DESTRUCTION

A million histories tell us
spring is a time of renewal
or refusal. I'm not
going to do this same thing
again. New mistakes.
New buds for the branches
I've broken & dug into my arms.

I have not been good
at living lately. I need
a little more water or
to figure out where all of this
is going, convince myself
I'm heading somewhere
worth sticking around for.

I was suicidal for a whole year
last night, blast furnace sun
burning my eyes & I'm feeling
adolescent dealing with rage
that fades & I am slightly
embarrassed by the extremes
I feel, the flashing hot, then

cold. Just when I think I don't
want this life, I realize this
is the life I want. Just
when I think it will never be
enough, it is too much. Not
wanting what I want, please
give me more that I can't handle.

TOMORROW I AM HOPING FOR GOOD NEWS

If you want sleep, you should lie next to me
& if your heart is empty, don't rush off to fill it
with some new breakage. I'm watching an arc
of light jump across the linoleum floor. The morning
always comes too late unless it comes with you.
I'm trying to remember the last time the sun broke
through the window at this angle, the last time
I knew the bliss I was looking at was a bliss I deserved.
Tomorrow is just an idea, something to look
forward too but never hold. I keep catching myself
falling from right now into then, reliving the misery,
when what I want to believe in is what the calendar
says: there is a future. So I write these notes addressed
to you, sketch myself into the long hours of these
every days I hope to live & keep living. Dear Gina,
Things can't get much worse. Dear Nate, Everything
will be okay, even if it isn't. Things are never so bad.
Even when I can't see a future, I can see today &
the sun is out & that is somehow more than enough
for right now. Give me this light & give me this
heat & give me something I want to hold onto more
than I want to let it go. Give me all this tomorrow, too.
Clear skies, bright & blue, welcome after a year of rain.

GINA MYERS currently lives in Saginaw, MI. Her first full-length collection of poetry, *A Model Year*, was published in July 2009 by Coconut Books.

NATE PRITTS (<http://www.natepritts.com>) is the author of three full-length books of poems, most recently *The Wonderfull Year* (Cooper Dillon Books).

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