

## Standing in the Glow of the Aftermath

You apologize for your tone  
and I stand there shocked.  
See, that's something  
I never saw growing up.

I saw hands clench around necks  
and fists smash through walls  
but I never saw someone say sorry.

Ocean Vuong says  
the aftermath of anger is care.  
I used to think  
the aftermath of anger was me.  
Like I was the ash settling on war-torn ground  
and foolish kids mistook it for snow—  
that is if there were any kids left alive.

I'm just a kid left alive.

You apologize for your tone  
and ask me how I'm feeling.  
I say, "alright,"  
but what I mean is

Thank you for your tone  
and considering how it may affect me.  
Thank you for holding me back  
when I try to cross the street.  
Thank you for kisses on the back of my neck  
and the way you hold me at night.  
Thank you for caring.

Ocean was wrong.  
The aftermath of anger is you.