

billow and pulse

Abi Pollokoff



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wide open in the meadow, a
shell in the greenspeak. wide
open & spinning in it.

gold thread spinning here, gold
heads tipsy. gold thread on the
arm & gold thread in the eye:
glisten & flicker & glisten &
gleam.

wingkissed & airy, i'm full up in
lilies. all harken & bloom. all
sunnery.

burrow in the toes & take root.
don't leave the windwatch,
don't leave the furl. fingers in
flicker & display. in parity &
pearl the little nailbeds, settled
& stretched. palms bedded
down with terrain, all tucked in
& gleaming.

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those toes are rooted now,
bone, something to keep
covered. the skin: a mesh with
its own weakness.

process & pestilence: virus in
the touch of the earth, soaked
all in & sobbing. see it & retreat.
see it & believe. the body is the
muscle & the dirtstrain. the
muscle strains & splinters.

this is the body being soaked

up. this is the body being
soaped in. this is body being
pulled down, pushing out its
skin & pruning. falling
skincaved into granite &
dismay. this is body rejecting
itself.

this is the self's screech &
summon: this, what's silent &
screaming.

the minute & the month take
the same time: breath only one
breath, only one breach.

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in this always assuming state:
tongue all twisted up about
itself. so many things in the
body, all sucked up from
below. so many things in the
body, so many things to cave it.
hard things & soft things. hard
things & soft things. hard things
& soft things all up the spine.

so: self-diagnose. self-medicate.
self-mediate.

measure & miss. measure &
miss. measure & measure
again. remind the self to be
human. remind the self to be
animal. tell the self to be tame.
grow a little.

a breeze in the breath. a music

now, what the body is made of.
breathe some life into the spine
& willow through it. bend &
don't break. beseech. beseech.
beseech. beseech.

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toes in the row of earth now,
self grows out the self.
wingkissed & airy, all full up in
lilies. what aroma here, what
odor. virus in the touch of it,
unboned & burning.

all full up with oil & thistle: love
the lump & curdle of it, a
disappearing act. pluck & dry.
crush & inhale. this body is
made of all these beautiful dead
things, all wormed up. all
wriggling. worms stretch the
rustle here: ruby in the root.
ruby on the brow. ruby is the
pebble & the sweat.

so soundless, this body,
bedded down with nettles. all
worked out & something to
grow, to gather. the madness is
a muscle, stretched & tensing.
all verbed out. all swallowing.
all worked out, the root & rush
of it now, all spineplucked &
empty. what toes. what root.
what vertebrae.

Abi Pollokoff

Abi Pollokoff is a Seattle-based writer and book artist with work forthcoming or found in EX/POST, KALEIDOSCOPE, The Seventh Wave, EcoTheo, and Denver Quarterly, among others. Her work has been supported by the Jack Straw Cultural Center, Hugo House, The Seattle Review of Books, more. Currently, Abi is the managing editor for Poetry Northwest Editions and the events manager for Open Books: A Poem Emporium, along with spending time in many other hats. She received her MFA from the University of Washington. Find Abi at abipollokoff.com.