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Epidermis

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Epidermis

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Epidermis

Victoria A. Blaisdell

I see no significance
in the prints upon my fingers
nor the lines along my forehead,
and the sparse scattering of words
that fumble past my lips
have fallen on few.

Like the time my mother
pressed a mint into my young hand
and I sucked and swallowed
and I can still feel the panic,
the lump, the way I could not breathe
or speak; I think
I swallowed too many words that day
and they have trembled inside
ever since, afraid to come out
and face the world.

And my skin, like a wall,
keeps others out, and keeps me in
and I am afraid that you'll impress me
with too much pressure
and I'll burst, the seams of my skin
spilling out. So I sew myself up
each day, filling slowly,
spilling inward
do not drown
they all say.

But you poke pinholes,
like stars, those pinpricks of light,
and I come trickling out,
a steady stream of restlessness
and thoughts too big
to fit the world.

I don't believe that I was born
to be anyone's everything.
I was born to taste snowflakes
to hear the sound of laughter
to wrestle with doubt
and to relish in the cleansing perfection
of rain.

I see significance in the way
we are always children,
learning life as we go,
smashing walls
just to realize—
we all fill slowly
but we empty in one breath.