

## LEAH TIEGER

### *Arterial Fault*

I am given a vein of quartz to place in my mouth slice by slice  
until my mouth is too full to swallow.  
A womb is carried in a womb carried in a womb.  
Heirloom's old meaning applies to a tool passed down  
or utensil. Better the ground than a displaced gene whose only known god is suffering.  
I am like my father's mother, who spent her last years in bed.  
Even the dead poison the earth.  
On the intake form a box for Ashkenazi. My great aunt  
jumps from the courthouse.  
Why add another frame to this procession? Some caged mammals  
throw themselves into walls.  
Inside my father a chronic obstruction, the coming fistula. If you beat a boy with a table,  
he will believe that kindness is a belt.  
Under the lithosphere there are oceans and a searchlight sweeping.  
My clubbed thumbs are more graceless than useful. I count six miles  
between cereal in pajamas and a superfund site.  
Name an ailment that can't be medicated. There is water in my blood  
and it whispers of the ground I drink from  
or I inherit a room with no way to enter and no way to leave.  
I'm waiting for the stones to untie themselves from my ankles.  
My mother unswallows a rage prescribed in white tablets. Her hands are a history  
of multiple sclerosis, which is a history  
of rift. Seething takes the shape of its container.  
How much of the body can be abandoned?  
The cell's orogeny moves toward vanishing and leaves no atlas of what  
the years have done  
or my inheritance changes its form but not its intention.  
Under the skin, a river like a voice sliding past.  
I can't untangle from the branching line where disappearance starts in the breast  
and ends in my lips. I unfasten my mouth and sand pours out  
into an earth that opens like a window.

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