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JASON PURCELL

MEN IN THE GUT

Scrape the inside of sleep the belly wall
tasting like yoghurt cooked broccoli
its emptiness leaving something
on the tongue. Escaping the body
that wants to quit from the inside.
It unlaces you all the tethers sliced
away. When I dream of this body ending
of opening the germ of the pain
I am on the side of the road. My hands
hold out my stomach my second brain
to the men who already want me to die.
This failing organ with a ruby wound
kissing the place it is so easy to be
stabbed or shot. A punch to the gut
I anticipate violence here one cell layer
deep shallow spreading roots
a memory system in my body.
On the side of the road a drive-by for men
homophobic in trucks swallowing spit.
When I was a teenager I let them
disembody me internalizing everything
through the mouth and now my stomach
wants it out. I am interested in self-
diagnosis. When I dream it is of trees
budding from my stomach
that will shade all the wounded men
who masculinity failed
who will lay their Oilers caps on my wrists
say I’m sorry and our fingers
will touch without their being afraid.