

Ana Shaw

Not the First Time

The worm
tosses out again
towards a sun blistering
the concrete,
jerking her
pink body, ripe
for emaciation.

She squirms
and jabs
the tough flat of sidewalk,
knowing her plump
will evaporate
into vicious heat
until she scorches
brittle.

Pulsing towards the
radiance, her very shell
constricts, squeezes
her organs so dry
she crackles
in the shine.

When she writhes
from burn
and lashes herself into
knots, black blood
spews from her
split skin.

Dew splashes from cavern
mouth of sod,
plunging to soften her.
But she won't stop
thrashing, thinking
how beautiful:
to crumple
in splinters,
refract that glare,
to shimmer translucent.

Ars Poetica

At the end of a farmer's backroad,
the mosquitoes sing praises
into rubbed anger as I pick and pray.
Blue succulence drips
off claws daggered towards me,
the freshest berries curdling into
June air, bursting like my own skin
plunged through bramble-bush.

I eat the branches whole, plead
for poetry—that snap and
sugar—to bathe every crevice
of tongue. But my mouth burns,
red welts rupture the split skin.
I suck and spew, spit back
twig after bloody twig.

On vine a single blossom rises.
It hums with the promise of
bite, dizzying sunlight dancing
between crisp skin. My teeth
cup softly a bulged juice.
I howl back blessings