

Vanessa Sylvester

American You

Railroad Tied
Eyes;
Plastic Stent Parts;
your kid,
IDENTIFIED.
Forking over two-four-nine
for bottles of scripts to
even out whatever
TRAUMA they sold you,
But you can't afford.
Plastic stents
pieces of wires in your knees, the
SPECTRUM of mobility
is the ripple that droops
over your belt, but still
IDENTIFIED
as malnourished with ankles BIG
over flip flops
with no tick-tock
because your ninety-nine-nine cell
has video and a clock.
On a Crystal Light night,
You go, in between commercials.
Rail road tied eyes
plastic stents
IDENTIFIED.

Aroostook Potato Harvest

The wrinkles on her knees
are beautiful
and each one
has a matching depression
in the black, chilly dirt of
the potato fields. Which in July are
giant bright hills – yellow - like the newest scrambled eggs
plunked among the fallow ones.
By September, the fields are
a deep spinach green,
ready and rich along the poorest routes.
North, at the end of the world.
even inside a car,
the polysaccharide smell overpowers
the reinforced steel and plastic.
Driving through a giant kitchen, one each side -
mountains of peeled raw sliced potatoes,
each chunk as big as dogs or boys.
One million cut sweating potatoes
makes the air a starch foggy tang,
one million raw sliced potatoes
piled up on a road
made of old Formica counters
and ready for the valley-wide frying pan.