

3 prose poems, featured in *PANK*, 2009  
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## HOLE

Some say the hole where her eye should be is beautiful and endless.

There is no jewel for that, no single story for where it goes.

Some say the hole is a symbol, like a delicate cave or vulnerable slope leading down the body and away from the incidental circus streets. Each humid corner. Telephone booth. Loud tattoo parlor. Chemical smelling dry cleaners. Gas station under vibrating construction.

She rubs the skin that rounds the hole. Faces west. Angled so the hole is unseen by the man watching her as he idles his car at the light, appearing as though she's pushing back sweat and hair.

In his head he makes a story about where she's heading.

If he knew her he would suggest they discuss the unique pulls of gravity that govern all things large and unwieldy, such as love, and the conversation would sparkle. "It's the idea of tension between two otherwise independent objects." He'd talk authoritatively. If she knew him, she would not be impressed.

Above them, the sun is sinking and milky light spills over the curve of her back, the profile of her breasts and the fan-like gesture of her arms. No jewel is so valuable as to come close to that, he thinks.

The light turns green and he idles the car a minute too long. Santana playing and his fingers lightly tapping the wheel.

She turns her head toward him.

## THE TRICK

He says “we could be like pirates,” and his starch smile reminds me of a 1950s postcard. Piiiiirates! He says, prolonging the I of the word while stomping at a seagull on the dock. There’s something about the tightness of his skull and the shape of his chest as he runs out of breath that makes me think I could follow him anywhere, if only to see he got where he needed to be. He motions me to his side, showing me how to decipher the flags on the ships in the distance—a trick he does every Sunday—and I react as though this lesson is everything and everything has been pared down to the essentials: standing where the Chesapeake cuts the horizon, with him—slightly like a pirate and running low on breath.

## AFTER THE FUNERAL

It was a Sunday—already a common day for crying. But everyone agreed—without saying as much—that had they bothered to cry, it would have been a small disaster.

Instead, there was the sound of the grandmother's wheezing on the yard's doorstep and the sharp mews of the calico at her feet, there was the ringing site of the burn holes in her oversized t-shirt and the loud clang of embarrassment for those who noticed the quick burst of her left nipple as she bent forward to pick up the cat.

And for those who bothered to consider it, this site of her made it clear that the day was wide open; somehow full, blank, bright, like that initial moment the rain clears or the fog lifts from the water and the boats return to view. And with such blankness came the notion that asking questions about what would happen next would have only stilted the yard's conversation.

She was fragile, yes, but she had said *don't worry*. Everyone wanted to see with her, not through her. Everyone let her be—for one day—a faithful portal into their futures.

So they let the day continue and in the yard, brown doves plucked the grass, the dog fell in the corner after chasing a fly, they ate pie that was as sweet as they had expected it to be and beyond the yard a siren floated by. There was a lengthy conversation about a falling chandelier that had killed four in Tucson and how, therefore, to own a chandelier could be deadly.

