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Ascension

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Ascension

Cover Page Footnote

Selected for the Poetry Bend prize.

***** Ascension**

First I crawled, then I stumbled.
And I stumbled through a black night for twenty years.
I felt around for a grip, something to lean on.
Everything I grasped stung my skin,
food turned to ash against my swollen tongue,
I coughed dry clouds of cancer,
my ribs rattled against shivering lungs,
I buried secrets: the termites consumed my innards.

A humming orb woke me from this cold hell, though.

With bloody heels I stumbled toward the blooming light.
Trembling, I outstretched my mangled arm.
I brushed past your soft bosom,
and you slid my hand over your heart.
You pulled me in tight against your chest,
despite my stabbing past.
I clenched my fist around filthy instruments.
I emptied my shame-filled pockets,
waiting for your retreat;
it never came.
You wove your silk-spun fingers between mine;
I dropped my pride—it fell with a dreadful clatter.
You lined my pockets with velvet and filled them with rubies.
In service of a wretch, you washed my feet.
I winced. You soothed.

My eyes fell into focus, and
swallowed crystal light.
Finally, my gaze fell on you:
Immeasurable splendor.

Hand in hand, we watched the ground sink beneath our floating feet.



Cody Schweickert