



Jesse Minkert

Two Poems

Matter Is

like a false wall on a pivot
like a rubber severed finger
in a bowl of low-fat yogurt
like letters added to familiar words
to make them unfamiliar
like snakes in Hollandaise sauce
like shark fin soup
sipped from a spoon
carved of elephant ivory

like a feathered mask
like hobnail boots on meter maids
like names misspelled
like movement under cover
escaping every notice but hers
like trout dipped in acid
remind me of why the different
species of utterance
dispense with these comparisons
for the sake of calm
for the sake of removal
for the sake of sleeping proteins
for the sake of rice wine
for surfaces burnished with palms
for broken fingernails
for salted bones
for sharpened sticks
for ball-in-cage
for whittler's mother
for eyelids tattooed with butterflies
for soap
for nights in cities
for images of knives
like skin torn from muscle
like stopped clocks
like the face of my darling
slack in the dark

Misalignment

The tapestry has a square cut out where Mrs. Capuchin
had sat at tea with Marv the constrictor. The sun is up.

At least that much. Mary calls out to her. His tongue
is fitted to the master lock that answers her with gauzy

courtesy as if a spider's web were wrapped around a fist.
She won't recite her pantomime at the touch of a button,

after all she's heard, the shuffle and shocks, enough
to make her drowse, even in places like here,

where the child careens in a truck, or here, where
the father falls down and wets himself laughing.

Jesse Minkert has written plays for theater and radio, short stories, novels and poems. Her collection of microstories, *Shortness of Breath & Other Symptoms*, appeared in 2008. Her poems have appeared in such publications as *Chantarelle's Notebook*, *Tattoo Highway*, *Harpur Palate*, *Snakeskin* and *Aunt Chloe*.