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Self Sacrificial // Where My Head Lays

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LIDABEL A. AVILA

Self Sacrificial

I have made a life
out of cutting out ribs
to build your spine.

My lungs have little to hold on to,
their hands slipping
on tissue flesh,
their safety net of marrow
charged with sheltering
someone else's vitality.

I promise I won't be too long

[if I run out of ribs,
my torso will fold over
and start plucking from my calves—
I think my femur is sturdy].

I just have to inscribe
my grievances
in the skin of this eulogy
before I go back
to giving
you
everything.

oh,

are you thirsty...?

I'm so sorry,

I should've noticed
your empty chalice.

let's fill it with the contents

of mine

[apologies for the metallic taste
but at least it's unalloyed].

LIDABEL A. AVILA

Where My Head Lays

I've had many houses
but never a home

*[one where my toes can curl
into polyester rugs
and the hallways smell
like Fabuloso and
fabric softener].*

I forget
which house I'm
in sometimes—

*the wallpaper getting air bubbles
from the barbwire fence underneath,
the bed springs tearing away
flesh, like tattered fabric,
after getting up at sunrise.*

so when I think
I hear ceilings crack
from rusting pipes
and smell gas from the open oven
I thought I closed, I
tell myself

“you do not live there anymore.”