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Vena Cava

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VENA CAVA

The cell-swirling heart was built to try,
to *pulse pulse* through the breastbone,
sleepless as a scratched eye. It is a muscle

it bruises, taking in blood, letting out blood
so when it bruises, it purples open in the plasmic
tissue of compassion, of kneaded dough.

Or it won't. Or it does beat back but jagged
like the fractured clavicle, the easiest bone
to break, ten pounds of lateral force & it tents

skinward like prayerhands. Compare that
to the twelve hundred pounds of pressure
it takes to sever a femur, unless eaten away,

already breached with bad blood in the marrow.
Ask the man who swims in a riptide what a mouth
full of kelp tastes like, and he might tell you

the weight of thinking is a spell of worms
burrowing one green apple that never rots
but with each bite repaints itself green, inviting

the worms back to eat. He might tell you
that it matters what you find in the undertow,
or just shudder. But it matters if you are willing

to bite down on chances, even if you salt
your tongue on splintered driftwood,
it might relimb itself in the hidden circuitry.

It's not easy, all this dreaming of resurrection.
Living well is even harder. Though when I do live
in accord with my own bounty, there is this

unnerving gratitude, grassy & electric in particles,
as the ocean I breathe this morning holds no diagnosis,
beyond the open bedside window.