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Mussels

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Mussels
by A. Pence

I dream I am a mussel, a button
and you talk to me in the rain.
I dream of severed legs
the gut-gut guttural sound
of the disposal.
I dream of doom--
hollowed-out,
someone I love
must die.

It is always summer
when I need you most.
The sun sets--
a hole opens in my heart
I sleep on a bed of stacked
bodies--and think of your voice
leaving trails on the
green front lawn.
I smell damp skin-seeping out
everywhere.
I have lost the sense of touch.

I pull my weighted head
out of sleep, dreams
vaults of silence--
in which I lift my hair,
back to mirror--
lift it like a shell
to see protrusions, tumors
my skull consumed
by disease or injury.
Somewhere you could be laughing
or driving a car.

In the morning,
I address an envelope
to you--
it is stiff, brown.
Inside--tatters of my wrist,
you will open it and know.
My hands fall away
under the faucet.
Once outside,
I am a hole against the sky
eating my shadow
off the sidewalk.

THE DROP
by Lisa Minacci

She was named after
an ancestor who was hanged by the neck.
The woman who killed her husband,
for some reason like deformity
or wrath.
No one screamed
not even her mother.
The choke
as her blood settled in her feet;
suffocation without a sound.
The older shadow
is dust under a hood,
the tongue distended.

This newer name of guilt
dropping through a boarded floor.
Her dress is cut at the top
in a circle for her neck.

She imagines death,
like a series of necks
and open holes
in the bottom of floors
for the passage
and the change of face.