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The Timid Dissection of a Deteriorating Lung

JASON REDERSTORF

al-lusion: a ventricle, once torn, is only as strong as the strongest stitch; even sutures that defend the weary are secure, like doors and windows and homes—are guaranteed to break and shatter and abandon.

if beauty were a **[figure]**
 within a thought,
 wrapped tightly in loose skin—
 a tempered mannequin,
 an elusive doll—
 left out for the sun
 to devour, for eyes
 to pick apart and drool over:
 epiphora, nursed in the bloodstream,
 the lachrymal glands, *obstructed*—
 like a dull blade teasing
 the underbelly, spilling
 your terrific guts onto
 the cement canvas below
 *(if by meaning beauty: the merging of shadow
 and colour, desire in crimson tide pools)*—
 selfishly constructed and fracturing
 beneath the weight of
 a careless mind, this **[figure]**
 would fold in on itself,
 if not already inverted,
 and wither,
 like a
 a sun-deprived bud revealing
 its misunderstood condition.

A seven second word
 spells trouble
 when arid hearts fade
 like the worn photographs
 of her—
 the wearisome smile,
 the half-hearted attempt

to dislocate—
a corner that once burned wistfully
and was blown or shaken out
by someone who was still
holding on too tightly,
holding on too blindly,
holding on too faithfully—

faithlessly,

to what once could have been—
to what *was* once,
now diluted.