

# Initiation

They don't teach you  
the proper pressure to use.  
They teach you how to hold the scalpel,  
where to make the cut. But  
how can anyone teach  
the pressure that just barely slips blade  
into skin, the strained space  
in the room of bright  
lights and starched fabrics  
and strange smells—  
and then,  
the sense of absurd normalcy.  
This is just what we do.

We peel back the flaps  
we've created—as we would draw back  
drapes or unveil artwork—  
freeing the muscles underneath.  
And suddenly I crave  
silence, solitude, some means  
to feel my own awe—  
that feeling  
of being unable to speak  
because speaking  
and feeling  
at once  
has become impossible.

Only with silence can I hear  
our anesthetized language—  
rostral, distal, lateral—  
describing such a simple place,  
maybe the space on his back  
always just  
out of reach in the shower. Or  
the spot by his ear where  
his children poked  
clumsy hands, climbing up  
to kiss his cheek.

Only with silence  
can I begin to reconcile  
what this will be, to separate  
the fibers of the body  
from the fiber of the person  
and yet  
to remain in awe  
of both.

I never expected muscles  
to be beautiful.

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