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672 Hours

*Yes, I try
to kill myself in small amounts...*

-Anne Sexton, from "The Addict"

I.

This rehab's pert landscape never lets up.
Colors ascend each day.

At night, my bed
evaporating gin and chemical lymph.

I watch the inexplicable face
of a dead clock. Chimp-thin, fed bananas,

Valium, the blue apples sheep will eat.
Big Books are flapping like nervous owls.

A cat-voiced nurse bothers my orchid.
I have no time, nor acquaintance with health.

II.

The dulling nature of bronze monuments,
or the melting of glaciers.

My cellmate's hiatus. His bunk, unoccupied,
the sea without its comprehending blue,

perfectly emptied, below my knees.
He had perched over my detox,

on wet-watch, bucket between thumbs.
These clinic pillows crush

under my perched elbows.
To my sober eye: dry rocks, coarse but sure.

III.

He threw me out like wine glasses flying.
Now, my sad jacket hangs there on the hook,

a fine silver corkscrew in its pocket.
We drank waist-deep, handed our fat livers,

the coronation of local drunkards
with daily liquors.

I popped open like champagne before him.
The tenant mice drowned in beer bottles.

Today, I'm left behind,
a green cherry in a highball.

IV.

My 12 by 12 flayed open.
Parched progress, an inflammation

of the brain in its dead lagoon.
My head engraved with sunshine, indefatigable.

Pieces of bone glittering like broken tumblers.
A blazing kiss, my lover who put me here.

My tidy partner
who revisits his checkbook,

lost in that green navigation,
keeping track of sequins on the ceiling.

V.

Yesterday's eggshell,
palm-smear and thin, discarded.

I suffer sufficiently in rehab, distilling the air to wine.
My patient face is good china, as fine

and clean as the moon in this hospital saucer.
Orderlies circle like seagulls.

I flinch beneath the ping
of pecked glass.

Alcoholics collected, made public,
a display of bottled fetuses.