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Severed, Asleep

how is it that when

a blink a blink occurs  
the story becomes lived in our barbs  
of neurons grit of hormones and never  
again in immediate light

before the blink we know not  
to stop looking hold open the eyes—  
everything is on its  
way toward whatever end or  
plummet, a small holy heart  
under the tongue singing  
on the way down.

## Bonepickers

We find the spine with gummy  
cartilage fused to a smooth reduction  
of wings.

I want the skull, not the  
common vertebrae  
I find blown down  
the beach--  
the obvious cup of  
a hip bone,  
the feathered elbow joint.

There are bonepickers  
underground in clean  
tunnels.

There are bonepickers  
in the Abyssopelagic sea  
and there are vertebrates  
on which to feed.

Give me the sightless  
sea gull skull not  
the ridges, the bottomless  
nerve root  
of your turned back.

It is always  
an airless drop.

One and Two

“In addition to having different frequency content the notes produced by the dual voices can be modulated independently of one another. The two sources can also be coupled to produce a single, complex sound.”

- Ornithology by Frank B. Gill

One: I am hungry in my throat.

Two: You!

One: Real hunger is in the throat, not the stomach.

Two: Full of wanting!

Two: Come flying to your full breast.

One/Two: I know hunger want in your throat and the you.

Two: (louder) You!

One: The song is my Father's.

One: I learned the language of compression.

One: Do I sing it correctly?

Two: Come, please.

One/Two: Compression you come learned sing please language.

One: I empty of air, all of it—not only two percent.

Two: I know your patterns.

Two: I know that I can still sing with a severed head.

One: At night I practice this in my bed, eyes closed, asleep.

One/Two: Practice in my bed empty of air patterns severed, asleep.

## Lake Habeeb

Five hundred wounded stand in the lake.  
Doctors tease illnesses out of their heads.  
*Do they teach you coping skills?* I ask each one.  
Some move through the brackish  
water on a flat-bottomed boat,  
mallards on the stern.  
*What about symptom management?* I say.  
They pay the doctors with teeth,  
their tough ridged gums lined  
with tobacco flakes.  
I pull on a slicker and mudboots.  
We mostly laugh and drink too much  
and talk about not drinking.

One Sunday Morning

The smoke detector beeps every five minutes.

In the other room, the dogs are in heat. The neutered male whines, carrying a toy duck in his mouth. The girl dogs nip at his feet.

*Migraines are something like seizures brought on by manic lethargy. Whole years slip into blind spots. Faces lose eyes and mouths. Let her fake sight, let her approximate lips.*

The mail doesn't come.