

Forensic

Lia Purpura

I shook as a child
a little box of maxims.
Like pins and
like needles.
I practiced stitches
on plain white sheets.
Buds developed.
I contrived scenes.
I contracted cravings.
Forlorn was a story in a word.

Rain

Lia Purpura

Streak
or *burl*
or *pill*
can all be right.

And if some words
lend themselves
they must
take themselves
back, too—

desolate
thank you
for your time.

Holy

Lia Purpura

It believed me into being once. I believed I was.
I did not leave. The holy left me.
How could it leave?

Did I not have what it required—
Belief? Desire?
I had both belief and desire.

I had the way a day was spun,
separating into simple tasks
(the pine floor mopped with oil soap

darkened each loose knot;
the baker's one good hand, flour-covered,
slipped, so deftly, rolls into bags.)

If the holy inheres in floors and bread,
why has it left me,
who recognized it well,

who gave the white cup a smudgy lip-print,
who saw the drain-snake's untouchable stuff
catch in sun, and shine?

I do not want a roadside shrine to keep the holy in.
I just want back its particulate light,
motes in a ray

between idling trucks, and to squint
and breathe the thick smoke
and be in the world of rising and bursting.

If the holy is practiced by things that rise in light and air,
then hand-in-hand, that almond of darkness we
pressed between palms, why didn't it bloom?

And if, once, the holy settled in the crease of my arm

where I knew an ocean to be,
why didn't the holy stay and break over?

Am I not fit?
Can I not be wed to ideals like *perfect vessel*?
And if the holy fills imperfect vessels, too,

why,
as if asking three times might be the key,
am I not also filled?

For hours now I have been walking alone in a new city.
It's very cold and the sky is deepening into a blue
that is also perfect in its falling.

It's the end of the day.
It must be there is something more
to give up, to hand over.