

SHACHIHOKO 鯧

Sometime at dusk, an unremarkable authority tells us that my brother is presumed dead. A fact that has no body. Like barbarians, we ask for a recommendation for a place to eat. We go to the sushi restaurant the hotel concierge says is renowned. We take off our shoes. The chef says he can prepare blowfish safely and we take him at his word. A warning on the menu says that fugu prepared incorrectly can cause numbness, paralysis, and even death due to a neurotoxin called tetrodotoxin. We eat the blowfish and mid-swallow I am sluggishly floating, gulping, my entire underside expanding. The table next to us complains I'm getting spines in their food. I apologize profusely and tell them this effect is quite unexpected, that I have yet to cry. They are sitting under a signed photograph of Taylor Swift who appears to gyrate in the waving of my pectoral fin. They say, this is not a place for you to puff up like that. I take a sip of sake, to relax, and my body begins to shrink, but only slightly. I beseech the chef, is there anything that can be done? He pauses, blade hovering over a marbled tuna belly. He lays down his knife two-handed, like an offering, and looks deep into my unclosing mouth. At last he says, *Though I can see the delicacy of your being, there is no way to get it. Poison is now the blood of you.*

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RESIDUARY

On the morning after my death
it will seem like any other day
where you will both wake and sleep
and some events between,

but I will not be here
to change the mop pad, or order
the coffee pods before we run out.

I will be waiting
under a fan of red gladiolus
in my one-day wooden overcoat
for my turn at the fire.

You will probably try to remember
passwords, and notice the bolt
come loose under the sink again.

Somewhere a hermit crab
will look for a new home, pink-
legged and antennae waving
into the vast undiscovered
parts of the ocean

that we know less about than
the surface of Mars. In a poem,
Mars is always a metaphor for someplace
unexplored—the soul, or the soul's
asylum.

I think about you under
the sink's open maw, a phone
flashlight, searching for the source,
water finding its way
as water finds its way.