

CONJUNCTION

as if a syringe

drawing estrogen  
from the urine of a pregnant mare

nostrils flaring, blood  
flowing into the gap

as if cutting back the shrub  
to see who could see back

as if turned over shoulder  
riding along a long moon

wax spent ahead wane  
done day's debt begun

as if the colt with mother  
when you became one

I was torn from the earth

and hung

## CHERRY HILL

I can't remember the name  
of the French restaurant  
and my dad can't remember  
the address  
on the hill  
I was born  
where the surgeon  
fell asleep in his car  
on Cherry Hill  
my sister died.  
The nurses are quitting now  
the ones who don't believe  
in science anyway.  
The teachers too  
and the public is falling  
apart that never was  
together  
October is falling  
all over  
the car

all over  
the sleeping surgeon  
his sandwich  
getting stale  
on the table.  
I want the egg sandwich  
from the French restaurant  
but I don't know the name  
or the street  
and my dad doesn't know the time  
or my name  
he calls me  
by his own shame  
and he doesn't know  
the names  
of my sisters  
or their due dates  
and having children  
is irresponsible  
anyway he says  
now the surgeon general

has issued his warning.  
  
My dad's father  
  
was an addict  
  
pharmacist and  
  
there was a violence  
  
in the home  
  
when we drove by it  
  
the screen door  
  
kept swinging open and slamming  
  
shut on the street  
  
where my dad tried to make it  
  
to the Major Leagues  
  
before he became a specialist in addiction  
  
solving the problem of his father  
  
over  
  
and over.  
  
We lived on the hill with  
  
the hospital and he worked  
  
where my sister died  
  
he played softball in the evenings  
  
the fields are turf now

and the Hendrix house  
demolished  
on the windshield the Space  
Needle plays its song  
still raining  
still dreaming  
still the same dream  
of slight return and  
what angel  
if you called out  
would listen to this song  
of the surgeon's work  
on a body that will die  
on a species that will perish  
in a world of medical  
terror and plastic  
band-aids that are not made  
to stick  
but to sell  
and any angel  
could save us

but there aren't any

so what

new ways of being

might these words open

instead?

The rain is pouring

now I step

into Elliott Bay to pick up

*Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*

trying to remember

something of it

I remember not

understanding the words

nuclear

radiation

leukemia

I understood

that I was ashamed

my mother died

the cranes came rolling

and I knew

they were a reference to something  
about death  
I didn't understand  
but I did understand  
that I was  
missing  
something  
the surgeon said  
we make a straight  
line like this  
to indicate  
masculine  
we move the nipples  
outwards  
like this  
like this  
as if  
he could show me  
with his fingers  
what is masculine  
I didn't want.

When I walk on Cherry Hill  
there is no distance  
between the breath  
I draw  
and the breath you  
lost the poem  
is the breath  
total relation  
I tossed you  
as shards into Alki  
an acceptable pollution  
the gyres cycle  
around the Pacific parts of  
you in Hiroshima  
and back to Manzanita  
you might be a blue  
heron or in  
the stomach of an albatross.



## THE WINGS OF AUGURY

thought the stork a crane  
maybe gull with

snakes in mouth, twins two  
daughters split wood

thought the king  
fisher a gunman with  
belt of bullets  
glottal gl-  
round throat  
when I spoke

thought one of these  
moons a feather one

falcon's eyes seeled  
another's head leather-masked

my father, with a soft line  
down his forehead, called it  
the mystery of life

## ADIE STECKEL

**Adie B. Steckel** lives in Portland, Oregon, where they co-edit the small press and literary record label Fonograf Editions and work for an HIV/AIDS & LGBTQ+ health and social services organization. Their work appears or is forthcoming in *Action Spectacle*, *Annulet: A Journal of Poetics*, *Dream Pop Press*, *Full Stop*, *Old Pal Magazine*, *Tagwerk*, *Variable West*, and elsewhere.