

VOWS FOR SINNERS

HOLLIE DUGAS

Let's say your body is the coffin
I lay our non-truths. And God
is the grave that holds you,
holding our crumpled lies,
our white and shriveled trash.
Let's say He carries our shame
in His metaphysical pocket—
sheepishly—like the girl's
phone number he jotted down
from a bar-bathroom stall
and kissed just once. How long
can we bear
to flaunt our imperfections
at one another? How cavernous
a cavity does one body need
to carry on forgiving?
My impieties fill you, a sharp
sour gas moving dark
and unholy through you,
seeping into the rungs
of your spine, eating
new wounds on your wrists.
You swallow the words
I feed you, a wad of maggots.
Tell me, how do you keep
the crow away
when you are bursting open
with rot? There is no other way
to apologize but to shovel
your fissuring body from God,
help you crawl out—
blackened and worldly.

