

SHARON BECKER

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# all stripped down

I've been dreaming of the truth  
in bodies. The awkward glance  
of fingertips, the slouch of reality  
in the rockinghorse curve  
of a relaxed spine. The blank trust  
of a yawning belly button. Lately,  
I've been dreaming of Gary Oldman.

In one — he chiseled stars  
and ate them raw from hands  
as thin and glinting as scissors.  
He smiled at me, belly full,  
his clean teeth spoke like street  
lights: Stop. Caution. Go.  
I smelled the palms of his hands — stars  
smell like pennies hidden too long in a jar.

In another he was drunk, said nothing,  
his cheeks bright and dancing with neon  
medicine. He smoked solemnly, stroked  
a hand over his thin English thigh.  
Watching his wrists — I thought  
I'd like to turn them over and bite  
the thin skin underneath, plucking  
veins like guitar strings with my teeth.

Last night, we swam in the pool  
at my parents house and I thought  
we were both 16. I turned on

the pool light — he kissed me,  
his tongue plum candy in my mouth.  
He raised his hands to my face,  
on my shoulders his forearms  
felt cool, slick as curving walrus tusks.

The truth is in bodies and I've  
been dreaming of Gary Oldman.  
All I know — his neck smelled  
of tilled dark earth, his hip bone  
jutting into the world with proud,  
blind isolation. This is not a poem  
about Gary Oldman, it is about  
the dream of my body. The longing  
for bones to show through skin  
like glosses of fine wire.  
The prayer for a belly as flat  
and white as a sheet. To drink  
whiskey with Irish despair —  
to kiss a man whose face has grown  
tight with desire and madness.