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JASON REDERSTORF

**Allusion:** a ventricle, once torn, is only as strong as the strongest stitch; even sutures that defend the weary are secure, like doors and windows and homes—are guaranteed to break and shatter and abandon.

if beauty were a [figure]
within a thought,
wrapped tightly in loose skin—
a tempered mannequin,
an elusive doll—
left out for the sun
to devour, for eyes
to pick apart and drool over:
*epiphora,* nursed in the bloodstream,
the lachrymal glands, *obstructed*—
like a dull blade teasing
the underbelly, spilling
your terrific guts onto
the cement canvas below
*(if by meaning beauty: the merging of shadow and colour, desire in crimson tide pools)*—
selfishly constructed and fracturing
beneath the weight of
a careless mind, this [figure]
would fold in on itself,
if not already inverted,
and wither,
like a
a sun-deprived bud revealing
its misunderstood condition.

A seven second word
spells trouble
when arid hearts fade
like the worn photographs
of her—
the wearisome smile,
the half-hearted attempt
to dislocate—
a corner that once burned wistfully
and was blown or shaken out
by someone who was still
holding on too tightly,
holding on too blindly,
holding on too faithfully—
faithlessly,

to what once could have been—
to what was once,
now diluted.