

homecoming
Sarah Hilton

prompt for 2021

this will be the last of giving
third chances, the ending
of art becoming callous at birth.
make room for your next poem to form
in the hollow of your clavicle. It will summon
softness—peristeronic basin.

inventory

points of contact

sky softening to water

and constellations

dad's mirrors

mom's mop, vacuum

both of their records

stacked in bedroom the colour of bare bone

liquefy between esophageal lining

Simon & Garfunkel, ABBA, The Guess Who

hearts synchronous by the end of side A

home melted down to hearth

paranoia snuffed in smoke and song

sister's sweaters: buried beneath your own, misplaced(?)

your body has been thinning out between home and homecoming

a semblance of routine if you have them she will burst through the door

when the carnage has reached your throat and the warmth will be

enough

swallow the blue of air and brine

hold fast to jetsam washing out with the tide

four plants:

snake plant at bedside table

philodendron red diamond, living room table

marble queen pothos, windowsill

spider plant hung on the balcony

they are homebound holding you up for air

a set of lungs to breath for you on days

anchored to bedrock a witness to remind you of where

you've been

why you've left

they are the anchor and the sail now

a conch in the belly

words of affirmation:

post-it note, bedroom mirror

turning warm with release, they call

"I love & accept myself the way I am

I am getting better every day"

In and In

Home has become a practice in erasure beginning at the floor the place where you begin
all horrors materialize—

Materials that erupt from your living
always on the floor if you look closer you can see their little mouths begging you
to die begging you to

open your own

You can hold your breath for up to 30 seconds but it's not enough time to make it from
the front door to the bed to cross the threshold without them finding a way inside

your body if you listen close enough

you can hear a mother waiting to hold you up by the ankles

she is a voice against the drywall every morning telling you to start
your erasure beginning at the feet

no separation between your viscera and death when she already has a hand inside
your membrane

the inside and outside becoming the same transgression

it takes three breaths before you consider living in water

the body suspended where sound and oxygen are asphyxiated down to pockets that
cannot break beneath

the surface the body held in place

all materials still with rigor mortis but you will only have 30 seconds worth

before you realize you can never separate yourself from

your

body

without slipping away from
home

Gordon Lightfoot said you'd become an emptied tree

but you've been hollow long before my leaving / because she told me that your body is vacant like a basin / a vessel that breathes between the antlers of a stag / and there has been no room to settle / no place to land in a cradle of bloody bone / in a belly of cartilage erupting from skull / the place where she has poured her body / to be unraveled in its gaps / dissected in ribbons / I think it would be more daunting / more alarming / to linger in branches where the bramble has been stuck in the lungs / to stay caught in marrow that strips the feathers from wings / the song from bird / the heart from the body / I call it guttural / you call it home

Holes

It tries to fill itself.
Near the centre is a hollow
Place that gapes open
To suck anything in.
It is a straw, and a vacuum, and
A suckling mouth. On the other
Side, again, by the centre, there lies
Another. It does not come full
Circle, rather a full stop that dissects
Itself. It is a box, or
A womb, or a grave. One sits
And waits to put
The world in motion: a tarped car
In an unkept garage – a hole
In a hole. The other, incomplete, spreads itself
Impatiently to fill a bottomless trench
The depth of a frozen star –
The heart of a lover
In a vacant bed –
A hole in a hole in a hole, living
In waiting. In the middle,
Separating the two, there rests
A dividing line, or a reaching
Hand. It casts itself down
Into the spiraling silver sky
And reels in some relief to
These gaping wounds, some purpose.
They exist, burning themselves
Into the sidewalk, so that more
May exist. On the outskirts of these holes
Rest the remains that never fit here,
The things that never truly filled them
To begin with.

love like a greenhouse

Our next life
together is nothing

like this: the house
will be flat, open—

the plain of Lesbos—
there will be no

need for doors or stairs.
Rooms flood into each

other—we don't
trouble

ourselves with barricades
and locks. Fewer

hiding spaces, there's
no want for escaping

here. In our home
together, there are violets.

Neighbours and visitors know
what sort of love grows

here upon their approach—
the purple leading up the steps, the ivy

inside every opening. Violets
growing crowns around

our heads; eyes peer in through
the open door and there

we stand bodies coiled in roots
growing life into each other.

Georgia O'Keeffe, Red Canna

after Souvankham Thammavongsa

This is the opening: the place where you unfurl
your fire.

The shape and curve of tilled soil,
it fills up and heaves out this fire,
unearthed, untouched.

It is the colour of sky splitting the world
at sunrise, bleeding, the colour
of labour breaking skin.

It's the place where you begin
to turn inside out, the spot
you choose to hide within:

Your first step. Breath bubbling. A promise
wreathed in light.

Sarah Hilton is a queer poet from Scarborough, and a Master of Information student at the University of Toronto. Her poems have been most recently featured in *Untethered*, *deathcap*, *FEEL WAYS: A Scarborough Anthology*, and *RAWSIY III*. She is the recipient of the E. Nelson James Poetry Award and was shortlisted for the Laura K. Alleyne Difficult Fruit Poetry Prize. Her chapbook *Jetsam/Jettisoned*, is forthcoming with Anstruther Press in spring 2022.

