

## **Long Before We Were Ruptured**

When we were fifteen

- We stole peaches from the bodega
- The juice ran down our chins

When we were hungry, opaque

Ghosts, the kind of children

On the side of the road

Or a back alley

Near a row of city housing

- In pamphlets

When all we wanted was an orchard

Behind our trailer,

And a sharp knife,

He hung himself

From a birch tree in winter.

- When we speak of dying
- We are double parked

When we were young,

When we were scared,

We ran into the arms of the men

Who loved our mothers.

Outside the funeral home

In the February light,

Our breath

- The color of moth wings.

## **Western Psychiatric Institute**

And then there is the light

That seeps from inside a pill,

A boy is nodding

Into his spittle.

In a florescent room,

A nurse bends over a form,

As the gloved technician

Places the paddles

On a man's chest,  
And then the flash

- There is a kind of quiet
- That cannot be named

A quiet white as salt  
Bright as dread

- That hangs from a branch
- Of a birch tree in winter

That passes from one  
Body to another

Like grief  
And is released—