

# **PARKING LOTS**

## ICE FISHING

drill, sit, drop, wait

creepers dug into the ice  
eyelashes heavy, flecks of snow  
mittens on the space heater  
small hands, red and raw

lure, fill, swap, bait

slimy white bucket  
filled with piss,  
someone waiting  
around the corner

spill, jig, stop, gait

hushed footsteps  
on fresh snow,  
drilling with an auger,  
bobbing in the water

skim, tip, gut, plate

winter waltz around the shanty,  
ritual for feeding children  
so slippery tiny bodies  
descaled and cut up

## **EULOGY FOR THE SWAMP SPARROW**

In autumn, a nest of new birds atop a rain drain.

Cattails are silent witnesses, swaying  
a thousand wagging fingers.

The week I turn six we throw out  
my old bassinet, setting it by the trash  
for when the collectors will come.

Small chirping cries are heard from  
the corner of the parking lot.  
Too small but determined to see, I find  
a stick. Two careful pokes and the nest tumbles.

These swamp sparrows are gutter babies,  
cracked from speckled eggs and raised by  
the croaking of bullfrogs in the marsh.

In my wooden cradle by the dumpster,  
I hold an artless funeral.

Feathered baby clutched with eyes tightly shut.

## **HOSPITAL BED**

One cold, quiet night  
when I was young and afraid,  
we got news of my mother in  
an air ambulance and prayed.

On the stoop in a serape,  
I waited like always.  
She'd come home exhausted,  
stumbling through the hallways.

But this night we rushed  
to get into the car  
and drove to the hospital,  
counting lines on the tar.

She looked like an alien  
tubes tied 'round her head,  
a halo of fluid,  
she laid in the bed.

Stole away to the counter  
For a swabstick and cup,  
I filled it with water so  
she chewed the sponge up.

It was never the same  
since her smile had changed.  
Now a child-like voice,  
far gone and deranged.

## **BRI RUNS OFF**

nude as a baby  
needed some air  
bolted out the door  
gone for a chase

where did you go with  
that sneaky grin  
so much laughter on  
your happy face

i'm running running  
the world goes blank  
i finally find  
the neighbor's place

your red face shines in  
clothes that aren't yours  
silly little girl  
you just need grace

## **FALL SOMETIMES**

Skip to the puddles  
trailing from the garage.  
Hold my hand while  
we walk with heads  
full of sweets.  
Crooked candy smiles,  
teeth to be loosened.

The river raises me,  
I swim in the ripple.  
Oh the light it makes,  
oh the laughter, the  
every time we leave  
they think we'll  
come back.

When the skies turned  
that graying blue,  
unsettling the dry  
pavement we walked,  
a succession of white  
cars passed and followed  
but never parked.