

## Snake Skin

Serpent-like I unwind—  
discarding layers,  
slithering out of skin

that no longer fits,  
no longer hugs  
the curves of my many dreams.

No longer a protection  
now a projection  
of shattered fantasies;

a lover turned violent.  
Broken ambitions  
constricting, constraining me

my 5th is tight, clamped—  
I choke on words,  
the things I never said

I ache for freedom.  
Salvation from the shadow  
of shattered dreams. Not you

the expectation was never you—  
you weren't my safe haven,  
but I needed you

I couldn't hide within you,  
you weren't a cocoon  
where I could become something new;

you weren't a safe harbor  
to catch my breath.  
You were, an unknown

my heart knew I didn't need.  
A false prophet, came to  
remake me in your image

but the truth was,  
you weren't who I needed.  
I needed me.

I'd *always* needed me—  
I read it in the filaments  
of skin unbound

shucked away.  
My patient history  
of great expectations

I slithered free and hissed at it  
as my Eden burned—  
the road lined with “maybe you'll be better”s.

Unholy knowledge served to me—  
encryptions etched in each scale,  
a truth I dared not see.

You were my Pandora, my Eve,  
the wake-up call I needed  
for the one I most wanted to deceive.