

*flesh wound*

I grip the blade  
with both hands,  
as tightly as a rope thrown  
from a passing ship.  
the metal edge pressed  
to each thumb  
like a doctor's ear  
to their stethoscope  
and their stethoscope  
to your chest.

diagnosis: alive.

clinically,  
I run the cold point  
from shoulder to wrist,  
every fiber straining  
to meet the steel  
without the third wheel  
of my skin.

my contents are found wanting.  
to be opened, unzipped  
as cleanly as a body bag  
hiding those who needed a second skin  
and couldn't find one.  
a cabin fever that never ends.  
smoke signals dead  
from pitting their heads  
against the walls of an echo chamber  
with no doors, only windows.  
pressed against plexiglass  
and yearning to trade  
one darkness  
for another.  
it's too much  
to hope for light.

it doesn't make sense  
to tell people this.  
not in the warm sunshine

which could show me  
so many other things,  
not the featureless face  
of my wrist,  
locked so tightly against my knees  
there would be bruises  
if tomorrow ever  
decides to show up.

I'm concentrating so hard  
I would forget to breathe  
if my body  
would only let me.  
I don't want to make  
any more mistakes.  
I follow the blue-green line  
the way a teacher would be proud of  
and at the first sight of blood  
sticking out its slick red neck  
on a many-headed beast  
my heart stops  
tripping over itself  
and stays down in the dirt.  
my hands  
go as limp as two rag dolls  
and the screaming  
cuts off like the radio  
of someone who's heard enough.

into the silence,  
I pray.  
I pray  
for a skin  
that reflects like mermaid scales  
like a knight in armor.  
like a magic mirror -  
the kind you can look back at  
and not flinch.

some wounds are time machines.  
some wounds are doorways.  
some wounds pinpoint the exact latitude and longitude  
of your pain but people will still miss it.  
some wounds you can even

slip inside, close your eyes  
and finally  
come home.