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Your Words My Words

Dallie Clark

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after reading other poets...

I don't know where your words
come from –
what fleshy
folds of language they live in –
at times like maggots
on rotting tissue – other times
like airy green-tinged
sprouts reaching
for sky.

I read your words and weep
that I didn't write them –
or else I rock-skip over them
so I won't get wet.
Sometimes I don't want to swim
in their murky brownness –
their swaying fields
of cold elodea. Too much effort
not to drown.

But the truth is –
and this is the real truth –
I exhale my words the same
as you – and like yours, they push up
through morning dirt like daylilies
or spew like vomit
from my gut. The relief is just the same
and neither of us sleeps
until then.

Dallie Clark



Photo by Claire Shipman