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ALBA CRUZ-HACKER

Deciphering a Sheet

You, a clean-freak, come to me in dreams
 refusing to lift scattered trash
 from the front steps.
 I grab the broom, you snatch it
 from my hands with a flash
 in your green eyes. It was never there
 before. You ignore nesting mice

on the top kitchen cupboard,
 show me a white sheet filled from edge
 to edge with words in your own hand.
 And I finally understand
 every reason for you:
 your honey for wild beasts,
 the absence of your voice, your choice
 to remain a stepping rug.
 I come back drenched,
 your sheet hung clean.

Alba Cruz-Hacker is a Pushcart Prize Nominee and a Poetry Editor for The Pacific Review. Some of her recent work appears or is forthcoming in The Caribbean Writer, The DMQ Review, The Pacific Review, Poetry Repair Shop, Can We Have Our Ball Back, and Speechless.

A. MARY MURPHY

Something Like Raw Liver

She asks if we want to have a look and holds it towards us like grilled trout artfully arranged on a sterling tray instead of placenta in a stainless steel basin. I see something like raw liver but don't spend a lot of time looking. It seems an odd thing for a delivery room attendant to do. My doctor's been called away from a party and arrives between my knees in a Hawaiian shirt with liquor on his breath, no time to get into his doctor's costume. I remember the blood spattered on his glasses but never think until this moment that it must have hit his shirt too. I feel badly about that now. Between spurting blood at the doctor and politely inspecting my afterbirth, I bellow my son out into the world. He doesn't cry but it isn't required. Only breathing is required and he does that. So he isn't made to cry. He almost comes six months ago but we hold onto each other for dear life then so we can have this moment now. When the speckled glasses ask if I want to know what it is, I say I already know. He is wrapped in a blanket then and lain in my arms. The doctor has apparently forgiven me for calling him names and gone home. Everyone goes away and turns off the lights. We are left alone together in the dark. We go to sleep.

A. Mary Murphy is an Alberta poet and has recently completed her doctoral dissertation. Her poems appear in a variety of journals, including Planet: The Welsh Internationalist, Canadian Literature, Malahat Review, Wascana Review, and The New Quarterly.