Souls / Diagnosis:

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Jay Ladin

Souls

Stripped
Of the underwear of sex, they color,
Embarrassed by the concepts
Dangling from their nakedness,
Cravings to be joined and entered,
Hardened, flung open, rolled
From subject to object position, fingered,
Filled, enfolded
By distinctions
They cannot bring themselves
To mention. For some,
The body threatens
To smother, split;
For some, it’s vague, voluminous,
Swaddling as it settles
Like a mother’s skirt
Over a child’s head. When they meet again
Beyond their bodies’ Referents,
Will they have grown
Or withered? I’m a woman, this one says.
I know, that one murmurs,
Zipping her into her hips.

Diagnosis:

The virus that replicates
easily as a kiss
between lovers who cannot admit
the life they have begun to live
bears only a passing resemblance
to the lives that each imagined
before they admitted
the kisses that like a virus
slipped
across the border
to life from lifelessness,
transforming other into self, self
into a DNA strand
twined and twinned
beyond recognition
whenever they stand close enough
long enough to kiss