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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.

Jay Ladin
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