

Autotomy
by Greg Rhyno

You press down and cut
through a pepper.
Expose seeds you shouldn't eat,
things you take out with the knife,
and a pregnancy—
the smaller pepper hiding inside.

There are others here, too.
Grey mushroom and bleak onion.
Ginger appears animal.
Cut off an arm and wait for it to grow back.

On hot metal and oil,
they whisper simultaneously: a desperate crowd noise,
the sound of dirt sliding endlessly from a shovel.

In my kitchen, you scold me.
My knives are too dull.

The white lines are visible
when you angle your wrist
just so. I don't ask.
I see them the way you can see
hot and cold moving in a sunbeam—
the shadow of something transparent.

*(This is how I imagine it:
The light from the bathroom window is whitish and immobile. Without heat. Your pupils
are large. The sink is stopped and the faucet running. A part of you falls dark, then
brightens into living stained glass.)*

After dinner,
tea hemorrhages in the pot.
Red water curls and reaches for us with its thin fingers.