

ANNIE CHRISTAIN

Orbs Whose Collective Sum Signifies My Age

Think of everything that has led to my seeing tadpoles eat strings of eggs from their mother in a captive-breeding program.

I want to touch my face over and over again. To take you with me so we can rub ourselves with fungus and lie between cracks in rocks, waiting for smoke to emerge from a bottle.

To finally get our wish. To be that smoke.

I sewed my sexual fantasies onto leaves (the fantasies that involve my scrambling to reinsert all the orbs spilling

out from my chest—all the orbs whose collective sum signifies my age); ripped them up, along with the fabric softener

you pulled out from inside your sweater (only to find a bee); and scattered the pieces near every notable meteorite on display I could find.

Now the mother in a captive-breeding program has to use her hind legs to push away the tadpoles eating strings of her

unfertilized eggs. The tadpoles writhing in her reproductive foam need a chance at the eggs too.

All I could think to do was tape a string of pearls onto the mouth of a Freud action figure, put it in a box labeled *neurotic*, and place it on your doorstep.

You remind me of an alternative: the ant infected with a fungus that drives it up to the highest point it can find

so that when its head explodes, spores are disseminated
to the widest extent.

I left a note in the box: *While looking for fresh produce boxes
to stow away into, a chicken frog stepped in my trail of leaves
and thread and brought back the disease to his species.*

When this trail touches you,
you will roll over enough for me to see your bare skin,

enough skin for me to squeeze a small drop of water onto,

to acquire your nervous system,

to weave it with fibers growing around us
that ask for nothing but our promise

to stop thinking of ourselves as human
in any way.

When I call you a host,
stroke your chin for psychoactive venom,

search you out and collect you again,
only to release you,
only to worry about
and change your gender with pesticides
again,

can you stop yourself from mounting
the resulting manifestation?

You write down my chemical signature so I won't forget.
It says: *You come from outside.*

I feel myself kick.