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Abstract

on the top shelf of my book case
between a guide on egg identification
and my grandfather's red Darby Bible.

Keywords

poem, poetry, abstract, food, body

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May 10, 2013

I keep my kidney stones in a salt shaker

by John Allen Taylor

on the top shelf of my book case
between a guide on egg identification
and my grandfather's red Darby Bible.
A friend told me it's like a smoker keeping
cancer in a box of Winstons. I don't have any
idea what that would look like, but it sounds
nothing like the intricate, calcified
crystals my kidneys turn out from time to time.
Snowflakes cast in stone, the color of raw
sugar, each one a different, unique pain.
They clink in the shaker when I bring
it down to make a deposit. I never look
at them, but I know they're beautiful, coral-
like, tempered and porous like an ostrich egg.
Sometimes I wonder if Jesus
ever had kidney stones, if his doctor
recommended drinking a six-pack in a warm tub.
I wonder if that centurion's spear tore through
years of scar tissue—if Jesus said to Thomas,
"This is where they were."
But the old Darby has nothing on Jesus' kidneys.
I think if he had kidney stones he would keep them

in a salt shaker on his top shelf between
a six-pack of Fat Tire and his grandfather's
copy of Song of Songs.

John Taylor is a knower of small things. Among those things are goldfishes, California poppies, and 1940's glassware. He lives in the Pacific Northwest and is at this moment sprouting lentils.

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