

cicada shells

you are not jumping, I said
you are carefully considering
the water temperature
from atop the diving board

you are glancing at blurred
shiny faces nearly indistinguishable
you are not plunging in as promised
because the water is too murky
the faces too bright and dark
and the eyes too fixed on a
naked you

you are not jumping
no matter what words were
exchanged at full sun
they do not weather
crisp autumn goodbyes
that hang on the trees
dead cicada shells
deceptively empty and lifeless

you are not thinking of jumping off
that diving board anymore
you are clinging to it
on hands and knees
scrabbling at the slippery surface
you are drunk and desperate
you are trying to look dignified

you are not fooling anyone
the only way off is to
give up your shell and fall

-Jenny Kokai