

**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*