

Habituation

by Mark Wilhelm

First I saw through his sternum
& pry it open—ribs
crack / sinews snap
—I wrap his clammy intestines
around my hand & remove
the lifeless liver—which never really
lived but belonged to a living man
with a wife & two children—
both girls / eight & twelve
—who laughed during horror movies &
cried at his mother’s funeral & feared
being alone & is now lying dismembered
/ toe-tagged in my hands.

This morning
I put on a pair of jeans—the rough denim
scraped against my thighs / pressed tight /
rubbed hard when I walked—but soon my
body adjusted to the friction /
it didn’t bother me
anymore.

Now I take stock of this corpse
/ can’t feel the denim.