

*Sarah Bahr*

# Purples



Peer at your reflection  
in the smooth skin of the eggplant  
your father would never eat,  
in the peppers that grew in your small garden,  
in the glob of Heinz ketchup  
you attempted to drown your green beans in.

Snuggle close to the threadbare fur  
of the one-eyed dinosaur, whose arms  
you clasped tightly around you  
every night before going to sleep,  
to the right head of a Dragon Tale,  
a fleeting vision of the street sweeper  
with the graveyard of stuffed  
animals in its grill.

Clutch the wiffle ball scoop with which  
you plucked the scratched plastic  
ball tossed by your mother from the air;  
study the swirling surface of the rubber ball  
before it cleared the backyard fence

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for the 19th time and splashed  
once more into the middle of the lake.

Gulp the 44-ounce Fanta cherry  
and blue raspberry gas station slushies  
you and your sister downed  
with your father's blessing,  
rushing home to scrub your lips raw  
and shine your stained teeth  
before your mother could discover  
your secret sin.

Listen to the late-night crackle  
of the sizzling explosions that sliced  
the sky once a year in July,  
to the rustling of the glued, taped, and tied  
array of streamers that dragged the street  
behind the caravan of another  
year's homecoming floats.

Marvel at the swirling particles  
that stained the porcelain toilet bowl  
after your sister learned  
that vitamins don't flush;  
stare transfixed at the bruise-  
like beds of your nails  
after another Indiana winter.

Try to see the allure of an amethyst ring  
glistening in the glass case at JC Penney  
when all you can think of are one-eyed  
dinosaurs, eggplants, and the murders  
of hundreds of thiamin lions.