

Wound Care Ghazal

Bitter, all lip and canker sores, I know my friend
hides behind her hair. Sings to me low. My friend.

She's freckled all over like bananas, and fast
with a soapy blade—hand it here slow, my friend.

Gave herself back to the fear, a warm roadkill doe,
guts looped in a bow even, like so, my friend.

She lies in bed with me, latched tight to the covers
after the alarm. We have to go, my friend.

Still wearing work boots, she plays tuna can cat tunes,
goes wobbly-mouthed. Weather this blow, my friend.

Drink clouds her clear sweet deep, piles poison by the pond.
Lights it on fire. Kick, heave, and throw, my friend.

Years leaking pus, scabbed over: how far can you go
with an afflicted heart, black as crow, my friend?

Roots pulse deep below ground, balloon malignant mounds.
She's buried alive. Reap what ye sow, my friend.

Our mistaken signs, window screen constellations.
Future in moth eggs. Things we can't know, my friend.

Fight the sweats and the chills, sharp edges, hot liquids.
My friend is cooking. Row, spoon-oar, row, my friend.

She'll debride the necrotic, clean bandage, but then
still fester away. Love can't re-grow, my friend.

The cancer is back. She is barefoot on a chair
and drops the light bulb. Calls out, *Amber*, oh my friend.

AMBER HOMENIUK