

# The Oval

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## Gemstones

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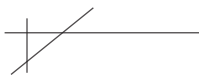
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kathryn egan

## GEMSTONES

This story has only two parts:  
How it started and how it ended.

It ended with abalone shell lining the back of your throat,  
Making your words precious and spit-slick.

You had opals of sleeplessness under your eyes and  
Cancer torching the lapis of your veins—  
There were pearls to be borne from you yet,

But you only had what, three weeks left then?  
Maybe less.

Already you were calcifying, becoming overgrown with moss—  
Reclaimed.

You said the stars told you your scales couldn't balance.  
You would die, not recover.

I could smell the earth in you then,  
When you asked me to remember you as Diana, free and tidal.

Two weeks removed and  
I could already see the origin in your dilated eyes.

It started with a tremor, the slimmest margin of instability  
Making your hands the first traitors in the battle.

You had dreams of the four horsemen and  
Dresses made of nebulas—  
There were balls you would attend with Jupiter at your side

But it ended in plastic, with no mythical balls to miss.  
No heroic battles to lose—just a normal life.

And how I remember you now is as gemstones.  
You were gemstones.

