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Floaters

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Floaters

In seventh grade I played with my vitreous floater,

coaxing it to slide

away at the speed of sight.

Not quite dead ahead, in my right eye,

a star-train of sloughed-off cells,

a beauty the dead

might

understand—an atoll off the Malabar Coast.

*

As close to dance as we got on Vanderbilt Avenue,

in Brooklyn,

we'd crush the white pimpleball between tops

of two middle fingers

and flat underside of thumb

and float it toward the chalked box on the wall. All

timing. If the batter saw it coming

his broomhandle would slash it back at our eyes.

No wall to throw at on Gates,

the bounce made it another game.
English:
the fluke, something we learned later was also
a bottomfish
with a need for just a single eye—

or two migrated to one.

*

Down for 72 hours, the nitrogen formed, a body rises.

There's hardly an idea
here at all, except how our skin contains
everything we make,
even as apertures silt in and crabs eye us
with the patience
of scientists.
I think there's a body in the water,
my son says. An hour later the Coast Guardsman
tells us they get about fifty a year
in Gravesend Bay—

floaters, he calls them.