

## *Strawberry Gash*

When my dead sister and I stop leaking and we are inside my dead sister's mouth. And she works up a good amount of spit. The boat floats near the roof of her mouth.

My dead sister casts some fishing line down her throat. Dead sister what are you doing I say. And she says I am putting a hook in my throat. I say why and my dead sister says I am getting some strawberries for us to spit into the mouths of the fish.

My dead sister could spit us into smoke. Into fog bodies. We could be the ghost. The drifter. We could dangle strawberry hooks for the fishes. We could cut a gash in the river and go to sleep.

## *River Twins*

When our faces bleed we try to skim the blood off the top of the water with cupped hands.

Our blood darks out the moon and the sky and the air. Our blood slicks the river. The river smooth enough we can walk in the air over it. The air black enough to flood our throats. Our throats full of sludge. Our throats open and a hook stuck in our lips. And our hands on the fishing line pulling.

We float in the air and pull the fishing line. The boat ready to catch us when we fall out of the air.

When the blacked out air dissolves under our feet. We float down to the boat the boat floats down the river and the river cuts between bank and bank.

And my dead sister on the banks. She glitches between either side. She ghosts me. She is lightning popping and I can't see if she starts on the ground or in the air.

My dead sister with a tracer. With a lightning bug crawling from her mouth. And the lightning bug flying up in an arc. And the arc between me and my dead sister.

The lightning bug wants to split my skin open and crawl between the layers. I catch it in my hands. I pick off its glow part. I smear its glow part over my palms.

And I rub the glow on my dead sister's face. And my dead sister smiles through her bug makeup. She smiles and she claps her hands. She giggles and jumps up and down. She jumps up and down a little too much and she spits up some.

Spit streaks a trail down her glowing face. My dead sister leaks. She gushes and a rowboat bug rides the gush from her throat. And we laugh.

But my dead sister can't stop gushing. Soon the gush is its own river. And my dead sister and I are scared. DEAD SISTER WHAT DO WE DO I shout.

I try to help her shut her mouth. We try to stop it with redblack sludge. And the gush river becomes a jetriver and the jetriver casts a rope of water into the river. I try to pull the water rope from my dead sister's mouth but I can't grip it.

My dead sister's popped eyes OO open. And she keeps trying to close her mouth and the jetriver rope becomes an exploding sprayriver. And the water is hard and it knocks me down. It sprays in my face and opens my cuts again.

My face trickles a bloodriver. My dead sister covers her mouth with her hands and her sprayriver gets finer until it is a mistriver. She mists the bloodriver from my face. I can see water in my dead sister's popped eyes but her mouth is almost closed.

When my dead sister finally shuts her mouth it makes her cheeks puff out. I reach to touch her puffy cheeks but she jerks her head away and does a little dance and gives me a look like she wants to make a stuck out tongue face.

But she doesn't make the stuck out tongue face. She doesn't poke a hole in her mouth levee and let the river gush again.

When my dead sister swallows the river the river bulges in her throat. My dead sister a snake swallowing a deer whole. And she looks a little sick.

Dead sister are you okay I say. She lies down on the floor of the boat. Dead sister do you need to eat some strawberry I say. And she reaches up to me. She pulls a strawberry from one of my face cuts.

She mashes it in her hands and rubs the juice on our faces. Our faces a smear of blood and glow and juice.

from *Dead Brother Here Is One Way to Walk*

My dead brother with his. Boat floating down the river. He sleeps but he does. Not sleep  
he only darkens.

Long enough for the river. To throw a new light shard. Cast a new line.

He slept until. We took him to. Where his body was. Half sunk in the silt mouth. Of a  
cold slow river.

When he wakes up he. Forgets where I was and what. I looked like. He looks. Surprised  
to see me each. Time like his colors are. Always changing shape.

When I ask. How did you die. He says I didn't. Know I was dead. Am I really.  
Dead I'm not. Sure I say. Here have some strawberry.

*Dead Brother When You Dissolve*

I string you to your delta. I outlived. Live here.

Scum drips down the fishtail. Into your mouth. Into your eyes. Do you want a strawberry I will hook it in your mouth you need to eat.  
The strawberries. The bruises. Bugs keep for years in the belly.

I cut open a fish belly. Bugs scatter. A fish hollowed.

Light shatters on the waves fragments I swallow till someone pulls me from the river.

The hole in your lip growing. Fish guts in it.

Hollowed self into skinsuit. Hollowed tree into boat. Hollowed river into bed.

Blood a hole to bury you in.

My face crossed out. Ghostwater skin shrivel. Your mouth dissolves into a smear.  
My head gashed open leaking you ask what's wrong. I'm going to put some strawberry jam on your eyes don't worry why it will help.

Let me bite off your thumb. Then you can stick it in the river. Maybe you will grow a strawberry.

Do you understand. Do you understand. Do you understand.

A broken egg streams goo in the river the goo dissolves scatters in the river the river swallows the fragments seeds that break open into strawberries.

I fit myself inside the fish wear it for a body it is dead too it is just a skinsuit hooked on a wire.

Look I caught a big. Are you proud of. All grown up now. Can we still play. We are getting so big. So lonely aren't you. I know where.

Dead brother your skinsuit shredded body bloat in the sludge can't breathe the line pulled slack the boat filled with fishing line I'm not going on without you going within.

What did I do with my death I think it was whispered to me the river keeps rising are you tired the river keeps rushing from my mouth the bird flew through me dissolves I hold it till I am done holding the hand you are done holding the bugs break out of your belly they crawl everywhere your skin covered hollowed out a smokecloud blooms from your mouth.