

The sweet disease

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His lips on mine like algal blooms on
stagnant water spread me.
Our legs entwined as milfoil, bound
as we once were to the stop & go & go & go
until we thought we were gone.

Immune to thoughts of disease, the rush
of lust's sweetness fuelled me.
I rose to his touch like the Sagrada Familia —
ever-expanding, unfinished cathedral —
my skin translucent as leaded panes, the
holy, holy, whole

I imagined embraceable. My immunity
is now fractured; highs and lows
of sugar siphon spontaneity.
Ebbing, my mind reels in undertow and
worry: will I die
in a car crash, will I injure others
with words spouted

at random, will anyone stay with me as I surf
this wave, forever? In endless routines
I claim my body's rites: daily test strips,
calculated eating, and stake out its beauty.

Stained and glassed my tattooed cells
radiate a full house of hues.
Replicating their miscoded chain
in a roar of rearranged notes, they attack.

Some days I am shaky, beached,
untouchable. Other times I'm cresting
as I come ashore, as if the islets of Langerhans —
birthplace of insulin — were Hawaiian, full

of birdsong and their saving ichor,
which I must now inject
into this gyrating score, this chemistry
humming with flagrancy.

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