

**claustrophilia**

*by Alyssa Froehling*

somewhere i dug my heel into  
as a child is now a grave for a hermit  
crab dead behind the shiny picketed shell  
of his home

and all the words i said back then  
to my best friend on that shore  
fell like sawdust and choked  
all the fish below

i sing the best directly after  
the heimlich maneuver  
is performed on me

and i know somewhere  
there are deer  
in the ocean  
floating

bloated with grains like poems  
professing their love for the roads  
they lost in the stretching  
cat limbed winter

the roads they lost  
love the breath of  
raccoons and i

sleep shallowly  
when the surface  
inside of your lungs

has frozen  
all the vessels over  
into recluses

and all of the traffic quiet  
behind the cracking  
sandpaper window  
of your skin

i want to knock the antlers from my head  
even if that means hanging all december  
in a woodshed with only the promise of water  
snow brings to comfort me