

Self-Portrait as Origami

Kara Knickerbocker

I wish I could say the first time was also the last,
only it wasn't: how I folded into myself, every moment
I shouldn't have held my breath like a newborn prayer,
slow burned my body as crumpled paper. I didn't intend this, again,
(& again) but it happened: birth of bloodcuts, sharp spinning shame
from guilt-dangled ceiling, every white & trying edge.
The art of disappearing into oneself like blanketing snow.
Each tuck an apology, doubling over, creased sky. Intricate
transformations of my silenced stillness: thousands of paper cranes,
some with wings, some with mouths;

the beautiful, small patterns of erasing.

Kara Knickerbocker is the author of the poetry chapbooks "The Shedding Before the Swell" (2018) and "Next to Everything that is Breakable" (2017). Her poetry and essays have appeared in or are forthcoming from: *Poet Lore*, *HOBART*, *Levee Magazine*, *Portland Review*, and the anthologies *Pennsylvania's Best Emerging Poets*, *Crack the Spine*, and more. She currently lives in Pennsylvania where she writes with the Madwomen in the Attic at Carlow University. Find her online at www.karaknickerbocker.com and on Twitter @karaknick.