



Allen Forrest © 2017 All Rights Reserved

I Want to Be

*

I want to be a burn, scorch a throat
lift the tongue in praise,
flame preaching in the mouth.
Worship me as I ascend. Can you love wildfire?

*

I am always an ocean, jellyfish jaw-clamped,
fish knotted-in-schools at the throat.
Whales curl into my folds and horse fish hide
in my tousled strands. Some days, I fillet
my feet to let the salt out.

*

I will never be pine. The soil disgusts me,
mocks my bone. I punish dandelions with a blow
for every falling leaf. For this, the wood cackles,
carves my name into its bark.

*

I want to brand somewhere you'll never forget.
Body, I promise you
I can change.

Passing

My mother
passes her shame

her shame
like a sure-footed man

my shame
a sure-footed man

convinces me
yellow can pass
for blue

convinces me
I am grief's bone
dug-up

quaking.

My mother's shame
is a bruise
deepening
on an infant's arm

My shame
is a cracked
coconut, its milk
unable to wet
a thirsty mouth

Her back's been broken
my back's been broken

halved spines
begging

don't make
mistakes

same ones
she makes

mistakes

same ones
sitting like
passed china

haunting
cabinet's corner
til a woman blows dust

off a teacup
set on a chipped saucer

before a daughter.

Ysabel Y. Gonzalez

New Jersey native Ysabel Y. Gonzalez received her BA from Rutgers University and MFA from Drew University. Ysabel has attended *VONA*, *Tin House*, and *BOAAT* workshops. She's a CantoMundo fellow, and is published in *Vinyl*, *Wide Shore*, *Waxwing Literary Journal*, and others. You can read more about her work at www.ysabelgonzalez.com.