

Photosynthesis

i. *Light*

The family
across the street flips
on every light;
yellow peeks through the windows,
through the blinds.
It illuminates
the driveway.

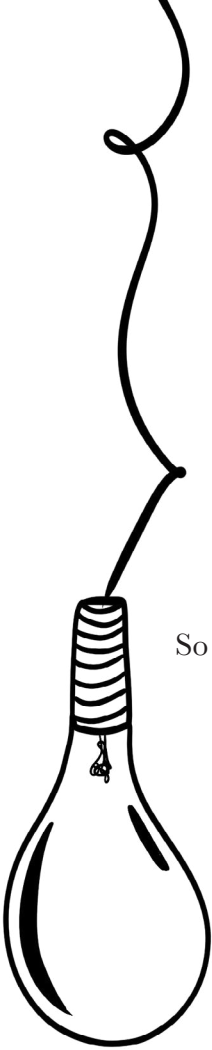
You've discovered that the person inside
me looks different from my skin.
So now you hold me in the dark, in blackness,
rain tapping against the car window;

I imagine God saying, *Turn on the lights,*
look at her soul, look into her eyes. Turn
on the lights or she will wither away.
I think I hear the click of the lights
but it is just the rain.

ii. *H2O*

When the hurricane hit, my mother hid
hundreds of water bottles in the night.
To keep us alive, she said;
but I
never valued my body more than
anyone else's bidding price.

My mother says
that I need to find someone
who will satisfy my thirst,
who will, like Jesus,
spew blood and water. But when



I pierce your side, there is only
black blood;
I will myself
to soak it up and
shrivel in the mud.

iii. *CO2*

The family
across the street flips
up every window;
wind sways through the curtains,
through the blinds.
It flows inside
the living room.

You've discovered that you've sealed me
in a box and now you panic:
shovel in more sand.

Turn on the lights, God says,
but you don't understand;
you tap my glass,
peel my petals,
pluck my blades
until I am
unmade and I
asphyxiate.

by *Hannah Butcher*

