Ekphrastic Reflection

by

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This piece of writing is one of eight ekphrastic reflections written by Notre Dame Creative Writing MFA students. Ekphrasis has been defined as a literary device in which a painting, sculpture, or other work of visual art is described in detail. Today, many contemporary writers use ekphrasis to translate existing visual artworks into new poems and stories. Does this ekphrastic reflection make you see the artwork in a new way?

Safety Pin

When I swallowed the first one it was purely an experiment with gut-time. How long it'd take to descend through the oesophagus towards the stomach, duodenum eventually the colon. The last thing I felt was the cool tangy metal on my tongue, all food had lost its taste of late. I imagined passing through my own body with it. The safety of being held by warm juices, gentle hugs of each peristaltic wave. I sat in class all day waiting. I'd been exceptionally good at waiting as a child. He liked to comment on that often, my patient temperament. Like when I would wait for him in the rain for our dates or whilst he spoke at length about steeping tea to achieve the correct flavour. In return he waited for me that night long after everyone had left the party. Waiting can itself be a sign of kindness.

This time, I waited to feel any sensation of the pin telling me it was still there making its way through. A jolt of pain or tingly itch would get me wondering about the little creature. I'd swallowed thousands of things in my lifetime, this was no different. I watched the clock as the teacher droned on. Meanwhile the creature moved inside, I'd never contained anything so small, sharp. I wondered if it would make it. I became suddenly tearful at the thought of it being lost, getting stuck in some bodily crevice. How it may never hold cloth together again through its piercing. Tears welling up in my eyes I excused myself from class. Took a walk down the corridor. Tried to signal to the little creature that it could work its way out of any body if it just stayed still, remembered where it was meant to be.