

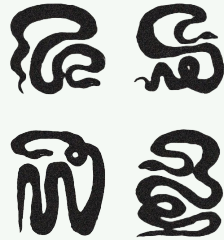
BY OWEN STEWART-JORDAN

Coiled Joy

this feeling of mundane joy coils
serpentine through me
wrapping around intestines
two kidneys and an unblemished liver
to entangle itself securely
in every juvenile inch of my heart

this joy pricking me like a thousand needles
set to pierce every nerve circuiting my body
is mundane
for while it strangles
my heart and fills up my windpipes
with scaly uncertainty
brutalising me for escape
it does so in the gentlest manner

this serpent is not evil
it does not hurt, constrict or bludgeon
this serpent takes my bloody guts



too damaged to let anxiety and new
part
unravel
it coaxes my feeble heart
to beat
find a rhythm not controlled by doubt

this serpent is not evil
for while its armored body sends pain
shivering through my hollow throat
its body opens me up

this serpent is mundane
for as it slithers away
the turbulent joy of a safe home
wraps my shaking body in her arms