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I Inhale My Lover

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I Inhale My Lover

Jeff Walt

Seduced back to smoking on the stoop—although I vowed
to give it up—wasting my days lusting after the sinewy

strength of glistening boys without shirts shooting hoops
across the street. A cigarette lounging between my lips, pulling

the first hit deep, kind smoke uncurling in my throat—
my heart stained yellow from yearning. So much craving

in life; each of these boys in baggy jeans and gym shorts
dunking, charging, cocks flopping; and this sweet release

of streamers, Os, tiny tornados, a smoky desire I can't
put down or live without—don't want to come back from

slow burning that fills me completely as peace. The radio
says things we can't see kill us a little every day, poison

in everything—the ozone, Comet, Mennen deodorant, the violets
outside my window; I could drop dead any minute from radon

slithering silently out of the basement, so I give in, continue
lighting up back to back—charmed by romantic greed, knowing

the statistics and myths as each slim stick takes a minute off
my life. I bless this half pack of Marlboros, the boys' sweat

that I want to lick from their slick, sweet bodies, E. coli
crawling on the kitchen counter; these warm cement steps

and the chips of scattered sun buried in the sidewalk, kids batting
rocks in the street, shadows sneaking into alleys, cats crying

for food, and this adrenaline rush: knowing it's legal to sit in public
on a stoop and kill yourself slowly as you fall in love.