

TINY SHOTGUN

**RUTH
MADIEVSKY**

There is a tiny shotgun
behind my eyes. If not my eyes, my lungs.
If not my lungs, an ambulance
must be going by, its siren a hole
I climb into, wondering about the person inside
and whether he is coming or going,
whether she will be making
any more egg white omelets. I've been thinking about disinfectants
in urinals and how they're called cakes,
which is like the time I told Alice
her boyfriend was a gentleman for driving
me home and left out the part
where he put his hand on my ass and also
the part where I didn't ask him to stop.
There is something about dark beer
and leather jackets I want
nothing to do with. Let's play
a game: you get to be anything
you want and I get to be something that's not
antifreeze. Let me be a slow dance
or a dime in a fountain, something more
than the air in a fist, something that doesn't leave you
in a stairwell like a spit-laced cigarette, yelling

my name
like it's a bloody sock. I don't know
why my hands keep turning
into asthma inhalers, why lately everything
has been storm clouds
and operating tables and I have locked myself
in the pantry with three matches and
a bag of ice. I guess
this is August, the breakfast, lunch and dinner of it,
a hinge I am oiling like a sun-ravaged body, my right hand
shouting expletives at my left, I guess I feel
like an earring
in a hotel parking lot, like the blacked out windows
of a community theater
where, inside, one woman
is telling another the difference between pain
and the idea of pain, and the man
selling tickets is sucking on a jawbreaker and trying not to think
about crash sites and government cheese.