

# Mercurybomb

CAROL HARVEY STESKI

Bored  
my sister and I once cracked  
a glass thermometer in half, watched  
its bloodball burst and the quicksilver spill out the shaft  
    shimmering and  
                                cleaving  
        into reproductions  
of itself      like funhouse mirrors giving birth  
and exiting a clown car.

For hours  
we watched this uncommitted  
straddler of states    shatter  
    and shapeshift                            as it pinballed across the headboard

as it slinkied the staircase we made  
with our hands, dropping

    down  
        down  
          down

like the Tin Man's  
tears.

What cellular chaos  
was spawned that day    in our toxic play  
while the eyes in the back of our mother's head  
expired?

    DNA rearranged into 70s plaid  
        or permanently edited fingerprints?

What chemical aftermath    decades in the making  
might some day trigger little missiles to multiply  
                                rippling

    and glittering like  
                                jumping

fish in our autumn

riverveins?

These days I feel fine though  
compelled to regular check ups so I slip

the cool slim rod  
under my tongue  
and wait  
wait

wait  
for that bloodshot  
to rise.