

Three Poems by Christine Hamm

Hotel #1

The sky a scrub brush, lowering
and lowering. My mother with her
Ouija Board, my father with his small

blond gun. The pool, half-full of leaves
and snakes. The bathroom leaking black
insects, sighing. My brother walking the hem

of the roof: in the off-season, no one to call
him down. The maid with her terrible red
wig, the desk clerk and son, teaching me

to sing like a trapped cat. In the other bed,
some large-boned someone with blue hair
shining like a car. I learned to alphabetize

my scars in that pearl-edged mirror; I learned
to polish my mouth with drain cleaner.

Hotel #7

Are you high? you whispered. The pillows hummed
like sweet pools of lit amethysts, the sheets as smooth

as a girl's long, long back. You worried about cameras
hidden in the walls. I worried that our neighbors' mumbling

had a pulse, a morse-like code. Vending machines rang
robotically, unsteadily, downstairs. *Do you want me to be?*

Your face edged by the deep blue glow of the pool at night,
how my feet moved so slowly through it, swish, swish.

Hotel #10

Aqua cinderblock, channel stuck
to the preacher's face, the curling

message along the bottom promising
you an answer to your call. The air

conditioner, humming, dripping
like a sick bulldog. The mattress

dipping in the center like a punched-in
stomach. How the doorknob breaks

after the second day, so one of us
has to stay awake all the time. The last

coke from the vending machine, ticking
on the nightstand farthest away from me.

Your mother on the phone. Your girl-
friend. So hot it hurts to touch the pink

blanket; you slip a wet washcloth
under my neck. I touch your hair

with my tongue as you sleep-talk.
Comfort, lasting a minute.

-Christine Hamm