

Two Poems by Danny Earl Simmons

Like Cold Wringing Water from Air

That's how lungs become frostbitten
balloons of rigid suffocation,

how skin blues around bones
brittle as a lake's last sheet,

how blinking hurts
against the forever-dark

of a wintertime working
to turn the heat of tears frigid

as wind-burned scars of icy need,
how I long to know your warmth.

Tracking Lovers on the Shore

I squat, squint. They're barefoot,
married with two young sons.
She is pregnant with another.

They don't yet know.
I slide my index finger
along the outer edges

of their soggy indentations.
She will fear another miscarriage.
He will fix the hot-water heater.

Tasting the gritty residue
with the tip of my tongue,
I know they are not moving away

from her parents, after all.
He has declined the promotion.
The arc of their path tells me

they spent all last night
reminding themselves of each other
to the steady rhythm of coming-

again-and-again-and-again
gray breakers.
I look behind, watch

their footprints begin to vanish
beneath the now rising tide
like forgiveness.

I move forward.
Step into their steps.
Think I can do this forever.

Danny Earl Simmons currently resides in Lebanon, Oregon. His poems have appeared in a variety of journals such as *The Pedestal Magazine*, *The Main Street Rag*, *Chiron Review*, *IthacaLit*, and *San Pedro River Review*. He is the author of a poetry chapbook entitled “The Allness of Everything” (Maverick Duck Press).