

IN THE AIR

The scent of sea creatures
dipped in black-orange slime
gasping for breath in drowning oxygen--

the broken cough
of black-plastered lungs
shaking sealed windows to shards--



fill cracks between cobblestones,
the workman's road.

The children play among the surf-spattered rocks
tossing fish-fragrant stones
into tumultuous black water.

Those grown lick the air with tongues of paper--
not tasting.

But the old,
who lie slowly slipping beneath sheets of pale color,
moan and mourn--
the air like acid burns their eyes--

like clouds
weep tears.

—Lydia Wetzel