

## permafrost

My attempt at finding happiness  
began here. It was bleak and I mourned more  
than I did when my grandfather died. Back  
when I felt more comfortable in my  
skin. When I could ponder enough to ask  
and I could raise my hand. Now it rests, sits,  
dormant in my lap. Questions are not raised.  
They remain in my hellish mind of my  
consequences. My attempt at finding  
something that could cure my ache has been with-  
drawn from my own conclusions. Now I hate:  
myself, my words, my father, you, and yes,  
maybe a few of the lovers who stood,  
[girls with curved noses, boys with erections]  
by my car, trying to french, trying to love  
someone preserved in her own wretchedness.  
Permafrost: the first time I heard that word  
I knew I was [stuck in] the cold. When  
I tell myself I'm trying to find some  
remnant of hope frozen, interior  
of my ice, I know I'm lying. It can't  
be free. I want to think it can: I can't.  
My attempt at finding happiness  
ended here. My pen is out of black ink.  
The end is bleak, I continue to mourn –  
more than when my grandfather died but less  
than the amount of times I come back from  
the dead. Persephone has taught me well.

—*Amber Alexander*