

Cell Memory

The fish doesn't care how long the rain patters, how it splashes against its door. For days and months, the drops have been replacing more of its world, but the fish doesn't care. Perhaps this is because just like the water, the fish is changing, every cell replaced by a new one. The iridescent scales don't know how the water used to feel, how it rubbed against the skin a bit too much. The white bones don't remember its weight, and how they had to support the body a little more. The past water was thicker, more abrasive, but the fish doesn't remember this. Its skin is duller, leaning a fraction to the left when it swims.

I don't know this as I eat the fish. My tongue has been replaced, it no longer can tell the meat tastes slightly off, a bit sweeter, a bit more like chicken. My eyes no longer know that the fins had a bluer tint, they don't remember the way the scales flashed briefly when they got stuck between your teeth. Your hand feels different in mine, but I don't know this. It has a different pressure, a different weight. The fish oil on your fingertips doesn't feel as slick as before. Your lips press on mine, and I know I was waiting for this, but since I started waiting, all the cells in my body replaced themselves, and now I don't remember what I was waiting for.