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POETRY | SPRING 2017

## A Vacancy of Wings

By Samantha Barrow

He doesn't do the butterfly anymore  
instead, caterpillars through the water  
the gentle waves reverberating back from pool tiles  
into swaddle shaped elder blankets  
echoing death's next cocoon.

I watch the lavish wide huddle  
of wet & bubbles  
through the engulfing windows  
of the YMCA  
waiting for his palms to  
split, spread and cup  
as they fly up out of  
the water.

I feel his hands on my childhood belly  
bringing buoyancy to my frame  
as I struggle to echo the rhythm he splashes in demo  
thump THUMP P U L L Breathe fly sink  
thump THUMP P U L L Breathe fly sink

His shoulders bob up the surface.  
Anatomically it's all there  
but '*amputated*' flashes through my mind

I want to ask  
Dad, what happened, are you ok?  
Where did the wings go?

but must grow out of these childish cruelties today.

He was not expecting  
to float like that again  
He thinks he's doing  
just fine.

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