

## Needle

By Sara Backer

A splinter of bone makes a needle  
that can prod a splinter out of flesh.

A needle can shrink a swollen knee  
or swell a basketball.

A needle in the lobe pierces your ear with gold.  
A needle through your ear drum silences the world.

Lovers needle each other,  
taking stitches in the heart.

A needle plunges poison in your veins  
or pulls out blood to reveal your cure.

Two needles fashion a sweater to warm your chest.  
Two needles hold thick hair to cool your neck.

Pine needles stay alive for three years.  
Their fragrance heals your lungs.

Several needles, well-placed, mend a tendon.  
Drinking one needle can kill you.

A needle can drag a dead singer back to life  
or scratch her vocal cords.

A red needle signals you are running out of gas.  
A quivering needle aligns with the North Star.

Listen for the sound of needles.  
Every story has one.

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**Sara Backer is a New Hampshire writer whose poems appear this year in *So to Speak*, *Crannóg* (Ireland), *Gargoyle*, *New Welsh Reader* (UK), *Rust + Moth*, and many others. Her writing has been honored with fellowships from the Djerassi Resident Artist Program and Norton Island Artist Residency Program. Her chapbook *Bicycle Lotus* won the 2015 Turtle Island Poetry Prize and is forthcoming from FootHills Press. Follow her on Twitter at BackerSara or on [sarabacker.com](http://sarabacker.com).**

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