

# Veined and Green

*by* Paula Ray

We grow our fingerprint on the end of an empty hand, a deserted five lane highway, silence we cross over with our airplane eyes on autopilot, running out of fuel, descending, condescending, ejecting our skinless desire to be seen, heard, crashed into like a wing crashes into a cloud. Today, we are a melody, unsung, unearthed from a grave of memories, the tilt of an empty glass, suspended above an opened mouth, expectation, need, dangling from a ledge.

Disobedient, a child climbs out on a brittle limb and laughs. We feel the tightening, the tuning of our strings, our ropes, our boundaries that strangle and choke. Danger narrows its eyes and a wry wicked wind curls the corners of yellowed pages from our diaries, our adolescent blood baths in the blankness of white, railroaded between blue level lines without a pulse where we've penned heart shaped question marks, seeds sprouting bowed heads, a congregation of confused supplicants.

This is our religion inside our religion, Russian nesting dolls, ornately painted void, our salvation, air. Let us breathe with our ears, our minds, our spines. With mouths closed, may we exhale through our fingers, feel the bark of the tree that is our spirit, read its bumps like Braille, and pretend we're blind enough to understand.

