

# Cruel Dreams

By Nikki Moen

It must have been my sheets and blankets  
twisting me up  
into the diameter of the bomb –  
for I just fell to earth without landing,  
without shattering into  
stratospheric dust

maybe it's a parachute  
or its the cushion of tendon  
they taught me to tear; the malleable joints  
in fowl carcasses I wrenched  
to render each piece separate

but no, its all the same

I could fly by easily enough  
without the cruelty of dreams  
I could scale the wall and go on and on  
toehold by toehold and slightly bleeding fingers

I could scrape, and crawl and lose and gain  
capillaries, muscle, arteries and fat  
like a twisted ancient magician  
shape-shifting into something more..  
or less

and when I reached the top they'd cheer  
throw me a celebration of achievement  
complete with medals  
and trophies made of gold  
that read:

I lived through this

and all the blood on the cliff face  
would be worth it

if dreams weren't there to  
show a completely different version  
of how things might have been.

