

# Singing the Cannonball to Sleep

At night, he sleeps with his mouth just open  
and his helmet fastened tight.

See how he hugs his knees—  
harm hibernating in his hands there,  
always prepared to give the ready sign.

With the light slipped into something more  
comfortable, the dark now pulled  
up to our chins, and our children's things

on the carpet—the paddle ball, the army man,  
the duck you must pull with a string—  
those leftovers from a day of ravenous play

all watch as he talks from within a dream:  
something about hopelessness, heftlessness,  
taking to the top—the man-made sky of the tent.

Sleep is his most difficult stunt,  
but each time since our first time,  
this is how I lull him: I tilt back, fill my mouth

with pine needles, clay, a copper coin.  
And when we kiss, I slip my tethers in,  
Say, *Rest your perilous head*, and for the first time that day

he can finally feel some weight,  
gravity's good fortune no longer eluding him,  
his two felled feet no longer neglecting the ground.

## Stacy Gnull

Stacy Gnull is from Cleveland, Ohio. She earned her undergraduate degree at Sarah Lawrence College and her MFA at the University of Alabama, and she is currently pursuing her PhD in Literature and Creative Writing at the University of Southern California. Her first collection of poetry, "Heart First into the Forest," was published by Alice James Books. She lives in Los Angeles

