

i take sonder to work like a tram (TI-RADS 4B)

By Sara Aldrich

bubble vessel arches over skylines like a submarine through a trench.
i walk to work through the hospital, river through causeways,
and i feel like an eel, a fish, slippery being watching other people live.
i wonder how many babies will fill their chests today.

it is scraping nine and i move too fast.
the faces smear until i recognize no one but it is better than seeing myself in them
nurses are riverbanks eroding under time and sometimes there are children that never speak.
i wonder how long the woman in black has lived on the couches . when she can go home.

sterile fluorescents sanitize skin like bleach, like baths , like a long sleep
and when the windows envelop me, fog wreathing better than breathing,
when i look over skyscrapers like reeds by rivers , i imagine myself inside them.
i wonder if that couple, whiteknuckled, have lumps in their necks too.

oh, here i am a newborn child and i will know what it means to heal soon enough.
ultrasound guidance. the doctor's hands were gentle on me but the mortal fear has settled.
grief lines these halls like a gown, like algae on rocks, but there is so much life here.
i wonder which i will fold into my own swollen throat. who i will become tomorrow.

what the hospital will gift me is up to her: greenlit pier, saline shrine, benign grace.
the willamette below runs her race for now. i run with her. i blink myself clear.