

W. Brooke Jarrett

Abdication

*"What a thrill—My thumb instead of an onion."
Sylvia Plath*

I, too, would delight
in a simple,
accidental
cut to the thumb.
A fortuitous event
for a dirty girl
with a worthless body
and sickening skin.
You thought you were dirty,
Sylvia, so am I:
it is easier to cut oneself
than to be cut.

We learn quickly,
after the Cardinal Wound—
the initial, violent penetration.
Let everything pass through
and nothing hurts anymore.
We separate, detach,
sever and slice.

Bloodletting is purification,
the language of the veins:
culpe, culper, culpon.
We cut, we are
the culpable ones:
crazy girls
who betray
their own limbs.
Let us hollow ourselves out
till there is nothing inside
worth taking.