

**“Bubble,” I said, “bubble me.”** He didn’t say anything, didn’t do anything. Didn’t move. I wondered if he had turned to stone, if at last this was a biblical moment, fulfillment of my hope for every mannequin thanks to Bubble, linking Bubble’s Memphis roots to Gomorrah, or else I couldn’t trust any other obvious connection, this one wanted to be a favorite. I wondered if he was inside the plaster cast I faced, all Humpty Dumpty core inside a so-so shell of congealed blizzard that could shatter into collage. I backed away, expecting eggshell in my eyes, to be followed to be sure by pearlescent egg-drop tears if being bubbled made me a better crier; why wouldn’t it? Wish I hadn’t read *The Snow Queen*, wish I hadn’t read any signs so wouldn’t know fusilli-hackled eggshell projectiles, some on the order of magnitude of spirochetes, would soon obliterate my irises all the way to smithereens which isn’t a bad outcome for pinwheels at the end of a world coping with the heaviness of a Bubble that wasn’t floating. Wasn’t saying anything, didn’t move. Wasn’t even trying to wrestle with a picture just on the other side of my forehead, the Buddha inside a bubble also presiding as king of the ants suspended in his bathing blend of formic acid and aldehyde, alcohol deprived of hydrogen, Bubble deprived of buoyancy. Had it not been for formaldehyde I would have believed in crystal balls and hoped for altered molecular chaining of moth balls —if Bubble didn’t know better, *naphthalene* would be a spell and couldn’t fail to coax the sacred, maybe rescuing the Good Witch of the North above the usual consequence of preservative, tied up in natural and unnatural attractions. Bubble is all rodeo underneath what he’s underneath.

I thought that pieces of eggshell might clump and conceal all the brown. I’ve seen a lot of movies. I know how much conspiracy, how much anything depends on imagination —what a fabulous fuel, so sustainable. It keeps me warmer than Bubble can keep me right now.

He didn’t say anything, Bubble didn’t move. He didn’t float like a bubble. He wasn’t clear like most bubbles, wasn’t a spectrum of soap film stretched so thin it seemed clear, clearest before the pop, demise but clearly worth it. A praise of water trapped between layers of soap film, Bubble was trapped. Memphis bound.

“Please bubble me,” I said.

Please let me show you the other life of oil spill. See it this way. Arrange it this way.

Shape it. Splatters of oil on asphalt are flat forms of stellated solids. Splatters of oil on asphalt are flat in a downshift to only two dimensions. Shadow factor. But with some power, with some exponent, Bubble me and restore capacity and volume, the oil slicks rise up as bubbles, gaudy iridescent oily beads, pustules and capsules of vitamin e, but the immobile Bubble was ready

for embalming, a formaldehyde drip,  
his feet hot with his blood pooling  
there, the toes swelling into tomatoes.

He wasn't thinking about bubbling  
anything. I associated effervescence  
with mosquitoes, the bursting

And I could walk as cool as ice. If Bubble would bubble me, soon enough I'd melt.  
Soon enough I'd evaporate. The thickness of the bubble wasn't even. There was pull  
toward the center, toward rounding, the fetal position. There was rebound. There  
was stray. There was wobble to justify the marauding of errors. All the highlights  
and sentinels of prisms were great sheriffs. The bubble's color changes with the  
bubble's thickness. When there's no light, the bubble gets to host a cell robbed of its  
genetic material. Crowned suitable for clone. The bare cell wall ready for portraits of  
monsters, hybrids as fertile as their parent imagination, parents split to make them,  
each one into two, likeminded, some parent hybrid forms of incest sometimes,  
Mitosis & Mitobro so close to ordinary tissue growth, ordinary cancer, most twins,  
hemispheres, brains, cans of infant formulas, dented, botulism bubbling brilliantly yet  
not exuding anything like what came out of a Krupps cannon even the first time.

of each CO<sub>2</sub> bubble as the hatching  
of a nymph. Above the pond:  
an effervescence of mosquitoes  
on summer nights in Memphis.

A walk  
through a glass of soda.