

Therapy

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Lauren Keep

It is 3 o'clock.
She fiddles her thumbs,
wipes the sweat off of her palms,
and instinctively bites
the inside of her cheek.
A pit in her stomach is forming.
“How are you?”
He asks,
beady eyes
staring straight through her.
In the pit of her stomach
exists an invisible rope.
She hesitantly tugs it,
“I’m not so good.”
It’s sturdy.
She tugs again
and her soft voice
begins to speak,
fiercely battling against
the inevitable break.
She tries to bewitch her feelings
into conceivable words;
tugging
and tugging
and tugging at the rope.
Eventually she heaves;
the rope tenses
as the heaviest piece of her hurt

erupts.
She sprawls it on the table.
It’s ugly and
it’s horrible.

But it winces in the sunlight.
So she keeps speaking.
Delodging the pain
out of her stomach,
dragging it up
through her throat,
until it spills from her mouth.
Pulling
and pulling
and pulling
piece by piece.
All at once it hurts,
soon enough it’s over.
She sits in aching silence.
But the pit has disintegrated.
She’s vacant.
She emptied herself out.
He just stares at her,
nodding,
with eyes full of pity.
“Well it looks like our time is up.
Can we talk about this next time?”