

Shapeshifter
an ode to Dissociative Identity Disorder
by Aron Ryan

I

I am a birthmark.

Lift
the hem
of my hoodie.
See this comma,
this raindrop dripping
down my rib, eclipsed with
your thumb. Press down. Feel
the bone caging this song. My heart
doesn't belong to me. I share this pulse
with him, with her, with these alters living
rent free in my head. We're squatters. We're
shapeshifters, changing gender as easily as
light changes colors. My body can't hold
its shape, any more than clouds can
hold the shape of rain.

II

I am
a prism.

Run
your fingers
through my hair
so the light
bends, breaks,
changes shape.

Reach
into his fire
flickering
gold curls
except her hair's
violet like a bruise
like wisteria
branches blooming
down my
waist.

Rest
my chin
in your hands.

Do you know
who I am when we
all wear the same face?

Am I transgender if my body
never settles on its shape? Boy?
Girl? Depends how light shines
through the prism of my mind

am I out of my mind?
Do you believe I'm real
as the shape of my birthmark,
real as the color of my
eyes: kaleidoscopes
reflecting
light.

III

I am

slipping,
so slip your fingers through mine.

Trace the lines in my palms.
Is there a future worth telling?

Kiss my soft-boned knuckles.
Are these fists just for fighting?

Press your thumb to my wrist.
Is my heart beating? I am as real

as my pulse. Beneath the skin
we are motion, we are commotion,

we exist by shifting our shape.
What's my name? I'll tell you. I am

alter: to change.