

Template

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We begin with pieces:

snow white ribs, palmed dollar coins,
sweet chalk lipsticks, drugstore booze,
mother's arms adorned with silver.

Children's games: he-loves-me-nots,
mind-memory imagining how fingers taste
Remember that dark-dyed roots grow into men
who leave hyphens out
when they comma in. They aren't neat.
They leave maps all over the skin

and leftover scarlets on the breakfast table:

syrup congeals into paperweights
for the morning-dust under your nails. Every corner
meets your gaze. Honey rises
on the bumps of the flesh
soaking mazes into muscle-memory

Take the first letter of every line in his hand
and form a perfect symbol story

for these houses were not built for children. When I wanted to bite him
on the neck he said: "Don't leave marks. I don't like
to show off."

The body has a memory too; it remembers how to pull
our fingers onto our fingers and forge them into puzzle-edges

Shower lights burn black into my back blades
when I take my own advice