

Katie Richards -- Two Poems

Embrace

Dying aster bows
to earth, faded
purple wavers

in the wind. Red
orange yellow
oak sumac

maple foliage
kaleidoscopic presses
the roadside. Fall's

arrival. Notice variation
by the leaf colors.
In the grass a deer

lies dead, legs
stiff, stems
of dried daisies

forgotten in a vase,
its feet stretched
apart by bloat,

open and still
as if waiting
for embrace.

Urchin shell

Waves lap black
sand, spread thin
across the beach,

edges pulled
forward, parted
fingers

of God's hand.
In a cleft between
two lava rocks

I discover the shell.
In its bottom a hole
my thumb fits in

perfectly, its former
red shadowed
to purple, a sky

contused to dusk,
its spikes still
intact, sharp.

Katie Richards is an MFA candidate at George Mason University. She is the recipient of the 2016 Mark Craver Poetry Award and the 2020 Mary Roberts Rinehart Poetry Award. Her Her poetry has previously appeared or is forthcoming in the *South Dakota Review*, *Tipton Poetry Journal*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, and *Cider Press Review*.

