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He, Li, Kr / Ba-Ba-Ba-Ba-Barium /  
Cortisol: This Is Only a Test

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He, Li, Kr\*

Oh, how they raise you,  
how they fly you as high  
as a storm cloud goodbye-ing  
that seaside sun that burns even  
the underside of your tongue with lies;  
oh, how *hi-bo, hi-bo, it's off to that other world*  
*we go* and go again with their latex-binding,  
balloon-bulging, hope-rising into BURST,  
into plummeting back to earth, no more Superman,  
super woman, fingering that precious pill; buoyant  
or weighty gas; fictitious cousin, kryptonite;  
all of it poisonous after all: the light, the heavy,  
the pumped glee pulsing, plunging  
all the way down  
to now.

\*Helium, Lithium, Krypton



## Ba-Ba-Ba-Ba-Barium

Yes, you must  
    swallow  
        it whole,  
the chalky milkshake  
    of poem waving *hello!*  
        *so long* to pharynx,  
to angst-raddled tongue,  
    to the long sticky slide  
        of esophagus,  
to the tumultuous  
    ballads of stomach,  
refrain of duodenum—all the way  
    to highlight and insight,  
        to the *Uh, Oh*  
of X-ray or the surprised sigh  
    of caesuras,  
        decimated now  
by the Ba of periodic charts  
    coated in stealth mission,  
        by notes diagnosed,  
by your mute, broken body  
    rising up *ba-ba-ba-ba barium*  
        in understanding,  
in hope, the memorized days  
    of College Chemistry  
        finally swaying, finally  
swinging, singing its healing  
    *rockin' and a-reelin'* epiphany  
        of almost-forgotten,  
gloriously healthy, end-  
    of-the-tunnel,  
        now resurrected,  
get-me-outta-here song!



## Cortisol: This Is Only a Test

that measures the thickness of bricks,  
the density of cinder,  
the weight of nails,  
the length of boards,  
the height of forever,  
the depth of never,  
the circumference of always that measures  
the way you remember  
or don't, the panic, the pressure,  
the pain, the mixture  
of mortar and memory  
that blocks the synapse,  
the names, the street, the day, the why of what was said,  
the when,  
the details drenched in stress,  
the hormones hammered, the constant  
construction of cortisol,  
stone by stone for weeks, for months, for years, for decades.  
This is the brain that was built,  
worry by worry, crisis by crisis, everything  
not tumbling down  
but up into this lonesome, loathsome  
wailing wall that only the brave can chip, tip, knock,  
dismantle, bombard, blast, decimate, eradicate, obliterate,  
annihilate. Now.  
Remember?

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