

JORDAN NATE

Shells from Oversea

I'm the white conch
You place on a wooden shelf in the back of your cerebral cortex,
Trying to convince yourself that I'm dressed in strings of cobwebs
And particles of dust, telling yourself I'm not there.

But late at night you pick me up like a signed baseball,
Putting an ear to my aperture and listen to me tell you about the gunslingers
In Farah, Afghanistan, how the grass bends near the stalks
When a helo lowers itself down to the stretchers, the methods of sewing
Command-wire explosives into the hide of animal carcasses,
How four pounds of explosives make a woman look pregnant.
And now on your knees, weak, you crawl back to base
To sleep on empty cots.

But every morning you find trails of salt that you let spill from my shell,
Sweeping frantically to dispose of me, putting me in a black garbage bag
And throwing it away in the alley dumpster. Poor Lover—
Don't you see, you're the salt, and my shell is home.

Jordan Nate lives in Idaho.