

# Ap-a-ta-pa-tit

*by Haley Xuereb*

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Stench lingers beneath my arms  
stretching knuckles against smooth white,  
it speaks to me, saying—steady, steady.

Filling the hollow of my hips—more, more, more,  
shattering my lower back—down, down, down.

In pieces,  
it articulates me into a grid of water,  
falling,  
split,  
a drowned box.

mirth mirth mirth

I wish kl-oding myself were easy,  
as resurrection from a life.

I wish I could button up my mouth/eyes  
so they wouldn't see me, wouldn't hear me,  
would let me hide—  
a specter in the streets,  
running naked, reflecting in windows.

The streets of Valletta are narrow and long  
so that t h e y have a hard time running,  
ba-drowning through.

I say strange words like Triq Villegiagnon.  
I spell them out,  
hurl the letters—whispers, whispers,  
melting on the pink-white-pink-white pavement.

And you turn to catch them.  
you spell pressure/lambda/letters  
p h y s i c a l l y.