

ON OXYGEN FIXATION

by: Alison Gerhard

I was sacrificed on the periodic table.

The augurs sorted through my entrails

(Carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, phosphorous, calcium)

5 B	6 C
13 Al	14 Si
31 Ga	32 Ge
49 In	50 Sn
81 Tl	82 Pb

And let my blood fall where it may

(Iron, magnesium, copper, zinc)

((Inorganic!))

So, I settled down with metals.

44 Ru	45 Rh	46 Pd	47 Ag
76 Os	77 Ir	78 Pt	79 Au

I made coy smiles at silver.

I flirted with zinc over candle-lit dinners.

I took mercury in the back of my car.

And cadmium,

cadmium lounged for me,

an artist's dream,

and she whispered the dirty, naughty
secrets of oxidation.

49 In	50 Sn	51 Sb	52 Te	53 I	54 Xe
81 Tl	82 Pb	83 Bi	84 Po	85 At	86 Rn

47 Ag	48 Cd	49 In	50 Sn	51 Sb
79 Au	80 Hg	81 Tl	82 Pb	83 Bi

That iron might rust, but silver tarnishes
and sometimes she puts on those lacy black things,
patina

Copper changes her tune entirely
(Enter sea-foam).

Aluminum becomes untouchable,

zinc turns to calamine

and cadmium,

cadmium corrodes,

laughing as her slash red brush strokes reach for air.

37 Rb	38 Sr	39 Y
55 Cs	56 Ba	
87 Fr	88 Ra	



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93 Np	94 Pu	95 Am	96 Cm	97 Bk	98 Cf	99 Es	100 Fm	101 Md
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