

but do not ask for fish and loaves  
multiplication.  
No, but for simple gratitude.  
For the ability to appreciate this cup  
that keeps spilling all over  
my immaculate kitchen floor.



## **What Kind of Monster**

*S. P. Bailey*

What kind of monster spits a wad of gum in a urinal?  
Blue. Brain-folded.  
Pregnant with identifying evidence.  
DNA. Marks from teeth  
that will long outlast the flesh.  
Because a yellow rubber glove with a hand inside  
with the hand of an eternal spirit inside of both  
will have to fish that out of there.  
And scrub the whole thing down,  
porcelain and chrome,  
with a green sponge and  
the spray-bottle mist of  
chemicals known to cause central nervous system defects  
if used without proper ventilation.  
My mom wasn't embarrassed by the thought of me,  
sixteen, walking around in no-name shoes,  
or denim with a counterfeit stitch-pattern  
across the back pockets,  
or working crappy jobs.  
I located the origin, formerly a mystery to me,  
of money. I mowed lawns and pulled weeds.

I harvested sweet corn and onions and radishes.  
I washed dishes and operated a deli slicer.  
I was a sad narcissus in a hairnet  
contemplating my reflection  
in a razor-sharp disk of stainless steel  
between slices of black forest ham.  
And I scrubbed countless elementary school toilets.  
Chris, the head janitor, had some disabilities.  
But he wasn't blind  
to student mockery or teacher patronage or my half-assed work.  
He taught me something.  
He wasn't literally Jesus,  
but he was meek and lowly  
and he descended below a few things,  
with a vacuum and a brown rag  
and a set of keys on a retractable chain.  
To make people feel safe and loved  
by emptying the trash cans  
and stocking the bathroom dispensers  
—gritty pink powdered hand soap;  
coarse brown paper towels—  
and by fishing wads of gum out of urinals.