

*Talitha koum**Tyler Chadwick*

1.

Your body disrupts the narrative:  
Jairus—unaccustomed to want—  
calls Jesus to pull his daughter  
from death. Jesus comes, touches  
the girl; she rises. Just like Jairus  
rehearsed it.

But you unravel the plot.  
Inhabiting shadow, your back  
against 12 years of doctor's visits,  
miscarried hope, and indigence,  
you slip into well-worn anonymity,  
veil yourself with a horde, and wait  
to be swept near enough the Physician  
to brush his styptic robe.

Bodies press bodies as the swarm  
swallows Jesus swallows you, and you,  
wearied by your constant wound,  
retreat into desire's dark womb:  
a hollow held open in the story  
between wall and pulsing throng.  
Fetal around your emptiness, folded  
and unfolding into your history, you  
dip your hand in the stream of fabric  
and flesh, grasping at the flow  
for a palm full of tassels and deliverance.

Without you, maybe Jesus makes it  
to the girl before she dies, maybe  
he doesn't need to reach as deep  
into the grave to revive her. Yet your  
imposition on his grace stalls him,  
steals the life Jairus reserved  
with his plea. Pausing at the doorway,  
hand raised to part the white noise,  
head tilted to eavesdrop on your touch,  
Jesus digresses, questions the intrusion.  
The swarm surges to silence. In habit,  
you duck into shadow and mourning  
but your joy calls you out: you confess  
to having unraveled his hem  
into the troubled pool of your flesh.  
He sears your wound with assurance,  
dismisses you from the disease. And

the girl slips from her father's hope.

2.

But you see it, there, on the tip  
of the Healer's tongue: the girl's name  
reaching to pull her from the deep end  
of death, its familiar litany ringing  
across the courtyard of her childhood,  
weaving its strands around her appetite  
until she can no more resist the pull  
and runs home, bursting through the door,  
hoping for something to eat.