

## Shape Shift

By A. Kaiser

Sometimes hide, sometimes skin. Sometimes hair,  
sometimes bare. My teeth, when there, know

what it is to clutch down into the downy neck  
of a doe. I sit on my prey, toss my mane, roar proud.

I've scraped artichoke leaves paper thin seated  
at a table of bejeweled guests. Used my carnivorous

vegan tongue to delicately slurp tiny slivers of flesh  
from a prickly urchin. From wild grown figs. Tooth-

less, I suck a flower dry, filter silt settled on a sea  
floor. I chase fast fellow mammals –

muscle high. Furry and blind, I spread my  
wings six-feet wide, rat jump & look you in the eye.

Call me discreet poisonous parasite, planet  
tentacular. Spores soar till the wind runs out –

root cling, enzyme leak. In spring, blossom honey.  
Scars tear down my back, bayou boats catching

my oh-so-slow moving might the wrong day.  
I mentioned jewels: been them, worn them.

Crystalline breathlessness. Copper glint. Pearl depth.  
The good earth. Coral sun. Lavender clench of moon.

I am one tree sharing water with kinship. Soiled  
tangled veins connect us and our liquid sugar feeds

saplings. Wide-crowning umbrella thorn acacia toss  
pheromones into hot-throated dust-coated savanna

air. And sex organs, you wonder. They come, they  
go. Such a joy and

liability, don't you think? And yes, I can do it myself,  
but don't we spend time alone enough as it is? Right.

I'd say I like being a star the best. In that void, a sky.