Sleep Thirteen

by Michael Channing

1.
Holding you is like summer
when chain link is entwined
with the scent of honeysuckle.

2.
An insect peels itself
from a shriveled chrysalis.
The forest whispers to it
in a disturbance of leaves.

3.
Electricity hums within the walls,
speaking in pulses to my eyes.
I think in waves of blurred sound,
like the tide through a nautilus.

4.
As light is filtered through the skin,
the outside bleeds in.

5.
Your kiss,
the lips of a priest to cloth.
Ocean aftertaste.

6.
I clack out meter on my teeth
and my fingers move
to the underwater songs of whales.

7.
Sand castles pulled
grain by grain
into the sea
rise in layers toward the sun
rebuilding Atlantis.

8.
I am only fingerprints,
floating on the Nile.
I am only teeth,
breathing like stones in a sirocco.

9.
Rising, my skin is infinite vibrating pins,
and bones tick into place like the pinions of a clock.

10.
I am the white rabbit,
late for the Red Queen's race.
My heart moves like a shuffled deck.

11.
Eyelashes speak like will-o-the-wisps.
Open them, close them:
wish, wish.

12.
Awake, I put one foot before another,
moving toward surfaces.

13.
When I sleep, I see only shadows, and only
my eyes dance.