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Needle Tongue

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NEEDLE TONGUE

Brooke Payment

You tell me about the stock market
and how the digits are up
two and
a half percent
and I'll tell you about
the demon that holds
black digits in the back
of her throat
and calls them out to me
one by one.

Sixty . . . sixty-five . . . one forty-two
two sixty seven . . .
seventy-eight . . .
two thousand and sixty two!
Back down to
shrink. sweat. sink. breathe.
Stand
on the white square
on the bathroom floor
and hear her tongue rise and
fall.
Flip. Flick. Spin
the wheel
before she changes her mind.
Every day
It's one twenty five . . . no, no . . . four
one twenty four and three quarters.

Package the meat
attached to bones
call them separately
ounce by ounce
and listen to her
auction them off with her long
black, needle tongue.