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Landscape of Toxic Ferns

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THAT I
WOULD
NOT OR
COULD
NOT
STAND

Danielle Kropveld

The very first shape I made was the shape
of the great barrier reef. Coral cut my foot,
handfuls of marbles spilled into my open wound.
One was an egg, the egg of a bright green bug.
The clinic didn't treat bugs.
Was anything saved? asked the toad in a blue
coat with gold buttons.
A red wagon, a snowball, chapped lips
& the memory; rain puddles covered in dust.
The landscape was repopulated with more toxic ferns.
This is a story about living with defeat.
3 of 5 posters on my wall were wet,
I was a bad influence on the gerbils at the pet store.
Each of my scars received a name &
they used their names against me.
I wasn't the only one using my toothbrush,
man slime, red wine, foam.
The toad wasn't sure which was the prayer.

LANDSCAPE OF
TOXIC FERNS

Mary Maroste