

After Augustine: Confession VIII by David Wright

A refiner's fire . . . a fuller's soap. -Malachi 3:2

And here, God, is my belly—
sucked in to thinness and covered
all day by dark cloth.

Look, here in the shower, full, filthy,
and naked, covered
for now in soap—O God,

Be the blue soap, great bar of coarse
blue soap to clean and abrade
this bared, hairy belly.

Scour me raw, Lord, scour
the tender and the roughest skin.

Scrape open the surgical scar—
hold open the wound.

Be the sterile finger to rub the wound,
make it burn clean in the steam.

David Wright's most recent collection of poetry is *The Small Books of Bach* (Wipf & Stock, 2014). His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Sou'wester*, *Image*, *Ecotone*, and *Poetry East*, among many others. He teaches creative writing and American literature at Monmouth College (Illinois). He can be found on Twitter @sweatervestboy.