

[Those gatherings of blood beneath your skin]  
*Nathaniel Lee Hansen*

Those gatherings of blood beneath your skin  
keep me awake at night—they bring you shame.  
We cannot speak of it, this state you're in.

Investigation's not something within  
your will, better to not determine blame  
of gatherings of blood beneath your skin.

You wrap a towel across your arms, its thin  
and frayed blue blotched with red: this parlor game  
we cannot speak of—mortal state you're in.

An inadvertent scratch or bump begins  
a steady seep you dab but do not claim.  
Those gatherings of blood beneath your skin

cannot be evidence for stasis when  
these continents have added mass, declaim  
we cannot speak of them. These states have been

assembling forces, drawing boundaries, *win*  
their goal, but what that means we cannot name.  
Those gatherings of blood beneath your skin.  
We cannot speak of it, this state you're in.

Nathaniel Lee Hansen's chapbook, *Four Seasons West of the 95th Meridian*, was published by Spoon River Poetry Press (2014). His work has also appeared in *Prairie Gold: An Anthology of the American Heartland*, *Whitefish Review*, *The Cresset*, *Midwestern Gothic*, and *South Dakota Review*, among others. He also serves as editor of *Windhover: A Journal of Christian Literature*. His website is [www.plainswriter.com](http://www.plainswriter.com)