

S. A. Leavesley

The Life of a Fish

I have lived the life of a fish
vacuum-packed in plastic,
frozen in white ice,
the cold of neat mechanics.

Flesh lasts for years this way—
fins kept clear and crisp;
scales moist with their own dazzle;
sea light in every gleam.

When dryness starts, it's the eyes
that blacken first: tight-bolted
in their sockets, dull-glassed,
all sense of movement gone.

Still, one random touch,
however brief or meaningless,
awakes the brine within.
Its wetness stings.