

Flare

Sarah Stivens

If our bodies were a collage

what would you slice away?

crop deformities limbs aching

languished or missing

collect our stitches

before they

bring out

our

ghosts

lay the glue down

over our neurotypes

really get our shit together

there are only so many whimpers
a canvas can hold

return us to the nest
books pills blankets
spent so long performing
our faces don't belong
to us

wellness

collect our acronyms
vomit them into the paint

listen
the thrumming of joints
our shivering hearts

knocking of insides
our liquified bowels
evacuating

a head its own neck doesn't want
ask: how many times
will we scald or suspend
ourselves in bathwater?
answer: we'll climb inside
the fucking kettle

FLARE

place us on your paper
where mismatched misaligned bones beg
for return to the earth but won't fit
in the hole these nerves have dug

will you cut out the legs?
rivers of electric

eels for veins
who've just learned to twerk

heels with false memories
a blue bottle and a sea urchin gyrating
to the sciatica bass drop
cuttlefish knees splintered and cracked

if our bodies were a collage
add some glitter
that should fuckin' do it.

Sarah Stevens is a poet, editor and disability advocate living on Bunurong Country. Her work appears in *Cordite*, *Australian Poetry Journal*, *Baby Teeth Journal* and other outlets. She was the 2022 Ray Koppe/ASA Varuna fellow and a 2022 Writeability fellow. When not writing, she's swearing at her sewing machine.