

"Devil's Darning Needle" was originally conceived of as part of a long sequence of poems, *On Mutability: The Body*, but it claimed an independent existence pretty early on in the revising process. Inspiration came from riding the EI to and from my far-from-home rented room while I was a student at the University of Illinois at Chicago. I was always struck by how lonely a place the EI can be, no matter how crowded. Commuter courtesy demands that you pretend that the other riders aren't there unless interaction becomes absolutely necessary, such as apologizing for butting people on your way out of a crowded train or asking if a seat is taken. Out of this sense of loneliness I constructed a brief encounter, albeit an unsatisfying one. The title and final line come from the mythology of my childhood, where dragonflies were called darning needles (or Devil's darning needles) and were rumored to stitch shut the mouths of children who talked too much.