

GOLDEN SHOVEL: NO DOUBT
HE THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING
– CANDELIN WAHL

(after Mary Oliver, "The Buddha's Last Instruction")

Beloved boy-man, too cocky to say no,
engorged his veins with self-doubt.
I wear a mother's shame for times he,
with mounds of talent, thought
to test his body, line it with shards of
glass, prove immunity to everything
liquid, powder, bright wiggle worms that
flash-panned the ache—but had to be had.
The scene on repeat, the whoosh of it happened,
bruises like Rorschachs bled patchwork in
his forearms, satanic tattoos draped his
bony shoulders. He crept a minefield of difficult
truths—to save his one precious life.