

## *TO A TOENAIL*

by Michael Gessner

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Dorsal plate gone awry  
atop the hallux of my left  
foot, the one red  
with embarrassment, that's right,  
you, you who serve no purpose,  
like a wisdom tooth turned  
inward, or the coccyx,  
that vestigial tail, claw  
of keratin curled into  
the pulp of my big toe,  
waking me with that familiar  
dull ache, correct yourself,  
acquire a sliver of virtue  
instead of invading your host  
as if that would make  
you necessary once again.