

I Have Heard

ard of People Being Born with Tails

or with Webbed Feet,

so why do you not believe I have a lizard tongue
darting out then in, in then out, testing the air,
tasting the scent of meat on a neighbor's barbecue.
I tell my wife the cut of pork—loin—the sauce's
flavor—honey garlic—before my fleshy forked tongue
runs the rim of my thin, nearly nonexistent lips.

Why must it be forked? I wonder at the mirror,
why a snake- or Komodo-dragon-like thing
for years scaring away clients on sales calls, women
in singles bars folding a tiny clutch under an arm,
scooting with Scotch or a martini to a dim corner spot?

I want so little—not even a human tongue,
but a chameleon's, a long, precise projectile;
from ten feet I could hit Roosevelt's nose
on a dime. As the daiquiri-drinking busty
blonde moves away, she won't know what hits her,
a fleshy arrow suctioning to the highest point
of her model perfect, lightly rouged high cheekbone.

Gary Leising