

Echo

I know that

I am not the first
screaming the future in a cup of black cohosh &
warm water
counting days out loud &
hoarding enough soap -

Ophelia is rising in the bathwater
laughing
beside the razor & the scrub.

The devotion to drown is as soul-deep as that
devotion to float -
ask Virginia
peering out of the mirror with the cracked edge
ask Alice if you can find her
blinking back across a headlight-glazed windshield
in the sticky haze of Monday morning.

All the reflecting things I know are so heavy -
the Moon and her kindred
the flashing fish & its sharp fin beneath the ice
the stained corners of slick magazines, unreadable by bedside lamp
the child who rests on my left hip
the pause & gap of my mouth and all the sounds that emerge from there.

Things break and spill out in all the little ways -
paint wears down eventually
a jar aches to be filled up again in the end
noise spreads out when it bounces back
a smooth shin requires a bandage
& there are desperate afternoons beside the sink when
I haven't bled enough to make me buoyant.

Let me rise
Allow me more than just salt & disaster to bathe my skin.

The truth is:
my nails cheapen my ring
my ring shows me up
my girth drags me down

& may I have a moment, please, for the things in my closet -
for the hanger staring mutely
unadorned
beside the red dress
for the threadbare shine in linens softened by
the breath of Desdemona.

Again,
let me rise
humming numbers into the wind,
spread-legged & staining the whole world.

Let me rise
there is too much at stake &
damn,
I am
so tired &
damn,
I am
so low &
damn, I am so tired of being so damned low.
So tired of waiting for
only an echo of myself to return.