

BODY OF WATER

At night
my skin began to
change. It was something new

to be sad about:
first, the disappearance
of birds outside

and then lines
where my body
stretched into little slopes

covered in half-buried
worms. Sometimes
I asked the mirror

why I looked this way.
I wanted
my sister's hands. I wanted

legs like a doll. At the very least,
I wanted a return
to my old

girl-shape: feathery and lean, durable

as plastic, now bent
in too many different
ways to recognize myself.

In bed I closed my eyes
and pretended
my hands

were pieces of paper

thrown out the window and scattered
below. My body became a pond,
fluid and skinless.

I was something with distance
from land, something more
than flesh for blood

to bloom out of, like the scent
of a petal fragrant and
mostly unseen.

COTTONWOOD

On my thirteenth birthday I became
a cottonwood tree.

It was painless and fast, the soft dough
of bones rising before

silence as the day moved on.
The other saplings

welcomed me, whispered
what's it like

to move? They told me they wished to run-
in thunder storms, in

fire season, at the occasional pinch
of pocket knives

carving lopsided hearts into
their feet.

STARES CAN

invade

like trying to see
the stems of flowers
through

their vase:
sunflower— thick and ridged; pansy—
emaciated waif. It makes

me want
to be bagged, be square-shaped
with a covered neck and

eyes sewn shut.
Too close to a
shroud, I can't help

but think. And what
of ice cold tiles on bare pink
feet— oh, how I would

miss all that.

SNOW STORM

While you drew
snow flakes on my back

I imagined the felt-tipped
pen was

something real,

 a permanent ice
bonded to skin

that before you was untouched
It was

 so soft,

like fingers, almost, or lips
small enough to kiss

 each lonely cell.

It was light enough, too, not to last
 too long. The next day,

shower water became grey
and I

felt

 like Springtime ground,

sad and bare
 in all

 this newness.

MORNING, AT THE SHORE

I wake and there is
no where to go but back to the lake.
I left my voice there, threw it

in the water days before, when the air
smelled like church and I didn't think
I'd need it. I walk the perimeter, dip

my face in and open my mouth.
When that doesn't work
I try stones.

As they leave my palm and
arc through the air I decide
to fly, not *to swim*, is the

opposite of *to drown*. These rocks
know both: what it means
to soar over sorrow, what

it means to land back in it. They
will never speak of it, though,
unless I dive into

the heavy bottom, and carry them,
unwillingly, back out.

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