

# Visions

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*No Prophet is Welcome in Her Hometown*

When the skin on your face warps  
in someone else's suspicion and  
curdles with lack of love  
and the electricity of so many  
strands as you dress and undress before  
you are shocked by  
your virgin emotions—

rather than hitting  
with your fists or  
your consciousness  
remember *thou mayest*

present yourself to yourself again as a gift  
holding all the shimmering of you

as you catch your reflection  
the flesh behind your thighs  
having not been seen  
unspoken beliefs statics to you in  
the bathroom mirror and  
the topography of  
the words behind your eyes

your face  
flexing  
hold your palms against your cheeks  
*speak to be real—*

another morning in your familiar body  
your particular, eternal existence.

*God in the Ladies Locker room of the Public Swimming Pool*

The day was soft for December, the frosted entrance  
chiseled free by daybreak lifeguards breathing clouds  
with every lungful, breaking glass with their boots

For a white woman in rural Montana  
she was dark, at eight-and-a-half months  
pregnant, she was shimmering

I was washing conditioner through my hair  
for the third or fourth time when she smiled  
at me and said, I'm here to do flip turns  
for my baby, I think it's upside down

I'm remembering this now, much later  
considering beneath my shower head that  
a good mother's womb is a safe place to be

I had looked for God most recently at the hospital  
leaning, perhaps, over his creation with steady fingers

and before that through the mimosa blossoms  
in my eyelashes, everything haloed in yellow

but to believe that I began in God's womb  
too, moving graceful from one side of the pool  
to the other, curled within her, spoken to

my effervescence catching the winter  
light underwater

all of her palms  
pressed against the bump of my almost back.

*Recurring Dream*

I keep dreaming that my  
mortification  
is embracing me.

A long embrace, our chests  
pressed together.

My back body mooned  
into his heaviness.

His arms  
around me.

His face bowed over  
the shelf of my  
shoulder.

His cheek to my neck.

And I keep saying  
'you have no idea  
how much this means to me'.

*Denial*

I draw rotten blood flossing between two molars  
and start resenting my parent's box of potatoes.

My brother and I spent long hours skating  
in circles around their unfinished basement.

Once, I thought it would be fun to touch  
our tongues together, which made him cry.

I was alone in the half light of some Saturday  
when I rolled up to something in the corner  
that even from a distance made my stomach drop.

But, in my childhood I was still brave in terror.

Brave enough to look at the tiny, green finger  
pointing at me, pushing through its cardboard  
box, petting my adolescent curiosity, tempting  
me with the truth of its longing for light.

I opened the box and wept  
at what had only ever happened under the dirt.

In my heart are sprouting potatoes.

I closed the box quietly and hid it  
where no one would ever find it.

And beholding so much truth I ran  
back up the stairs.

*Garment of Praise*

In your heart is silk. Boulevards  
of it, great distances, like a circus  
performer pulls from a ruffled cuff.

In the center of you is a tiny  
pouch for holding intemperate  
amounts of silken dawn. If

you can stomach plunging  
your hand down your throat  
swiftly enough to touch  
just the hem, grasp it!  
and pull licentiously.

Shake it wide with a snap  
and the sky will lay it out flat  
before releasing it back  
onto you—

a surrogate sneeze, a dusting  
a threaded perfumed canopy

to hold your body through  
grocery stores and swinging  
doors, froth, dust and dusk.