

Her bed is symmetrical, a line down the middle would prove.  
Two women, lying side by side, hands woven like a cocoon  
of pulsing wrists. A kick from her side reminds her she is not  
alone, but part of a painting. Blurred reality in familiar shades,  
lips like hers vanishing on the other side.

She used to tell stories and tuck flowers behind her ear,  
orange blossoms thirsty for growth. She could hold her breath  
under water, fish like, tickle the toes of other children  
swatting at bouncing water. The children grew, sprouts  
of their mothers and fathers, carrying weight on their shoulders  
of dinner tables and shoes. Meals with protein and vegetables  
and never ice cream before the last bite. Provocations  
left them uneasy.

Now, she can push herself under, defying buoyancy, clinging  
to nothing and waiting to be expelled. Counting from one to ten  
and back; nothing hides in her closet but a furry coat, stained  
with a stench of cigarettes and women draped on the sleeves.  
Things stick to her, first those she has passed on the street,  
a mistress reading the newspaper, twin girls in tweed.  
She'd like to shed a layer and remove the stench,  
leaving only fingers and a cloud where her hair once was.