

SHE GOT FED UP

she told Robert to kill them

but the foxes

were having too much fun

these chickens at Tractor Supply

were cheap and the anniversary

of that daughter's murder happened

while on assignment in National Forest

Ina gave her a small bouquet

otherwise I wouldn't have known

Then I am one of a few people who can be reborn to populate the world; soon there will be thousands of Sarahs crowding the earth. I do not want this. I have Oyster with me and she keeps sliding backwards down this mountain of blood red soil. I keep hauling her up by the collar or pushing her from behind, but she keeps losing her feet. Heavy soled people are coming down the path. Oyster and I hide just out of sight under the path's lip and a boulder's fireworks in lichen. I can feel them on the path above. We are safe only in their choice not to look down.

DISEASE TAKES

THE VOICE TOO

when he was sick on the phone

the nurse holding it

said he said my name

instead I had a vision

I'd been her daughter

in a past life's long dress

small purple

flowers repeating

I'd tripped

on an innocent run on a rock

she'd lost

me too

Getting into my car, I drive for miles to look at this house – white, low-slung, stucco, and molded in skulls. I keep asking people to live with me, but I can't seem to get a handle on how big the space is. Madeline kicks the door in to scream that someone named Tad is going to 'just burst' if I don't let him go first. I find a path to the door, but instead I follow twenty fish until there is a profound creature – pitchy black and shiny under the moon. It must be at least four feet long, lying just outside the doors with a small black terrier asleep or dead next to it.

WHERE WE'D LIVED      IT HAD LOOKED FLAT

of grass      like a wave

the ocean is despite    her calling

I'd travelled

we'd done this thing

neither                  of us always the mother

both of us always the child

then Dad built          a string telephone

a long wire    from the tree house

to the bird bath      but Whitney

just yelled              anyway

I really wanted              to hold that baby

In labor for hours in a pastel hospital, I give birth to a child – bouncing and rosy. Everything is going along. The nurses teach me how to wrap her. It is like a battlefield – how you take a golf cart up from town to the hill where the people died, verdant below a rolling mansion. Harrison drives. There are these gray green sculptures of people contorted in vain escape, in rescue, or with faces of sadness, terror, and love. The nurses tell me to stop doing this because it is precipitous. I unwrap the baby one last time – the child is losing its skin. I show the nurses. They say everything is fine, that this is what a baby looks like.