

Transcendence comes late, well after seven, that
age of reason when you're finally able, after games
of Catechism, to figure out equations for salvation.

Honey, you need a good cleaning. Your face
is covered with a dark green veil and your eyes
have lost their watery sheen. Mona Lisa's next, and look

at *Ginevra de'Benci*, cross-eyed as the day she was born,
now pearly as a baby's behind. The tints of her face
appear not to be colors at all—but living breathing flesh.

MALLEUS MALEFICARUM 3

Let me tell you what it's like with a goat,
gentlemen, his officious member wagging

upward, the spleen in his eyes requiring
coma on my part, the thrill flagged before

his first bleat. That rogue. He carried me
up the stairs to my bed which lay squarely

on the floor like any sixties witch's pad,
and took me there in full earshot of every

saint I conjured up to ice him instantly
before my babies climbed their crib bars

and toddled down the hall. That scamp. Who
knew cavorting against one's will

could be such an obstacle to grace—that
stench-filled dance on his part, turbid gulps

of time travel on mine. I see it now:
the Mom, the kids, sucking snow in a strange

land. The snow is blue in white paper cups.
I think it's Coney Island before the flood,

there's a horse diving into waves, salt
for floating, cotton candy, franks. "Hot

enough for you?" the tanning people say,
my own body nestled in wool, in fire.

FLASH

This female life is such a secret vernacular, I'm so slinky and sneaky, prowling the heat of Broadway with my invisible spear. The heat begins inside, radiates down my legs and up into my eyes 'til I'm crazy with restricted information, discreet as a hand circling a vulva. Soon no ova will descend the little tubes shaped like music, leap from the ganglia near the cashew-shaped ovaries, and break into the womb's dark clearing. The first time I masturbated, I thought I'd cheated on my then-husband, Ricardo. Someone had finally provided enough foreplay for me to reach the cliff and jump! That night I felt the fetus like a swimming in the dark of uterus and soul, nibbling at my insides, no, a knock at a tiny door, a tiny knock, lots of them, alien hands pulling taffy back and forth, scritch-scratching on a chalkboard. *No one can feel this but me* I thought but it felt like a scream and no one could hear that either. Who would believe the end wraps itself around the beginning, that I am ruled by hormones, this heat an ovum, the way the egg slips, incognito, into the cool obsolete, tinier now than a teaspoon's shadow.