

## Fracture · *Lisel Mueller*

Hard way of learning  
legbone connected to the kneebone  
et cetera, up the spinal ladder  
and out past the shoulder hinges  
to the delicate crowns of the wrists,  
removed, like monarchs in exile,  
from the revolt of the bones.  
Even they ring small bells of pain.

The burly shin bone that started it  
is incarcerated in plaster.  
*Mend your ways*, the doctor says.  
Meanwhile it strikes me with what he calls  
dependent pain, as I slide into  
a wheelchair, my infant's gown  
with its stamps of blue flowers  
tied behind my back.  
This is a hospital by the Pacific,  
two thousand miles from home.  
I depend on strangers, wheels turning,  
your nightly phone call.

This morning I rode to the sun-room.  
The gold sky folded flat  
to glaze the water, sweep  
the heads of seals in their brush with air.  
I was holding a pink sweet pea,  
a Sunday gift from the kitchen.  
The straight, elegant legs  
of fir trees floated toward the sawmill  
unhurriedly, orderly. One of them  
will turn itself into crutches  
for me to lean on when I depart  
this month of Sundays on my own two feet.