

Two Poems · *Mary Ruefle*

COUNCIL OF AGDE

*In the village of Agde, in 835,
an ecclesiastical court, after much
debate, ruled for the first time that
women had souls.*

Armed with a cotton-puff and a little sword
the bachelorette is attacking her toes:
lesbos blue, black grape, pink stupor.
The variegated half-face of a modern master
leers on the wall.
Everything she owns has its own white space
and is centered so: spare hangers
in the spare closet, shoes
in their own neat row.
The phone has its own room
and is held like a gun,
snug to the temple. Meals?
She'll touch nothing but noodles,
finely sauced in a cardboard box.
And babies? At the end of an alley
an old woman sits with her needles
knitting them out of dead skin.