

### *Portrait of Estelle Degas*

A few red flowers among the white in a glass cylinder she arranges without satisfaction. A problem of color and containment. Her hands on the vase or the white and red unfolding of the head. Then it is better to feel nothing at all. Another vodka and tomato juice until the glass is clear and reflected in the mirror behind the bar. I don't remember anymore. Somehow I got home and passed out on the bathroom floor, a black blouse and one black shoe still on. Like a red flower and when pulling the flower to your face with your eyes closed, it smells like nothing.

My mother singing above my crib with no expression, my first memory looking up. Then my face in the mirrored ceiling of an elevator. What is expected of vased flowers is to lean away from each other and die within days. It is not polite to cry and I limped and found the other shoe still black and upright in the hall. Somehow to look up is worse. Also to leave yourself, as opposed to someone else. Of course one shoe has no purpose without the other and when I put the second on I was taller and looked down as people do when shy or standing on a diving board.