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**For My Mother, Hidden**

She was flaming water back then, my mother —  
burning drowningspreading, breathing  
god-sized gusts of fear into my child void.  
She spun through days like a dervish amok,  
washing walls clothes windows floors  
baking dusting Lysoling vacuuming ironing.  
She was never young, and she never smiled  
except for photographs.

Once she said to me in a voice of blue-white intensity:

"I would eat shit  
if I could sit across from my mother  
like you're doing right now."

Another time, she said:

"Remember only love when you remember your child-  
hood."

Only that? Had she forgotten: her small fists  
hammering up and down up and down on my back  
while she screamed fucking kid fucking kid,  
holding up the hot iron she was using  
and threatening to put it to my tongue  
or to the side of my face if I didn't stop laughing,  
the soapsuds enemas she gave my brother and me once,  
sometimes twice, a week?

I don't know her.

Don't know how to know her.

But this part of her I would love to dissolve in.

The part that told me this:

"Midnight one night, I wake to a sound. Water moved  
by something other than current, you know? I see...  
a buck and his doe have walked into the canal  
to their chests and are drinking.  
Something moves in me.  
Like your first roll in my belly."

**Rusty C. Moe**