

ALICE IN PUBLIC RESTROOMLAND

In the grimy mirror, her eyes look
even more tunneled than usual.

*You'd have to dig pretty deep
to find anything worth excavating
out there*, she thinks. By *out there*,
she means, of course, *everywhere*.

And by *everywhere*, she means
in all three stalls and also in the sink-lobby.

What does it mean to add the word
“adventure” to phrases about daily life?

Will my hair catch fire if I light
a match and put my hair in the flame?

Something about mermaids and wet swans.

Even the tiles on the floor have names.

ALICE AT WORK

Honey locust now ivy now char
looks like fern looks real—must be
the seventh-graders again, one tore up
the rules: scraps of paper lettering the Bible
school halls but from the bottom
up distortion details

Jenny your eyes look like eyes
inside of other eyes the rings
rotate around your arms and one
leg this must be a raindance
only all that falls from the sky is
hello

 you say you want to be
a mountain postcard your hips
closest to the sun back arched
thunderstruck spill but the day
that we met you were moving
and the laws say this will not change

unless
during the lunchtime assembly
someone were to act upon your body
and turn you to wine or glass
or rain

ALICE SLEEP-CLIMBS TO THE SHED ROOF

She doesn't know how she managed the rain-slicked ledges again, or the loose, rusty gutter. The crickets continue even this far into October, and Alice takes comfort knowing it must still be far from morning—far from the sounds of the trucks rattling down Dickerson and the buses hissing from stop to stop. The day seeps out around her, below her, sunlight touching the grass like a network of nerves speaking each to each.

ALICE AND JENNY ARE ESCORTED OFF THE
SOUTHWEST AIRLINES PLANE

The flight attendant says this is a family airline.
This is a family affairline this is a family lair
I'm saying his is a fantasy error rewind—this the
famine rare rhyme, the femme-hair kind; firmly blared
sign forgotten leaking sewer brine.

Boarding pre-air their fingers entwined hand on
Jenny's knee the bare shine kiss
declared un-benign glare to decide
a plan to wait and see then snare them, pull aside
two women began a plea then resigned this is a despair
guide an aware collide the damned pair, blind, but
still they cut down the trees and prepared their lewd shrine.

So this is a family affair—line up to see it this is a family
affair this is a family this is

ALICE PLANTS A TREE

She digs a small, black-dirt hole
and lifts the sapling by its burlap ball,
fingering the tiny string roots, soft and fine,
smaller than veins. The afternoon moon
appears as a pale white thumbprint.
With her bare hands she pats earth around the base,
digs the tips of her fingers into the moist surface.
After she is finished, she stands and considers
the tree, waist-high and not quite yet a tree.
When the spring wind starts up, the tiny leaves
tremble and the stick trunk bows and then straightens.