

Winter 1992

Separation

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Separation

This is the world
round and wet
rafted with dirt
peopled with parents

whose daughter closes her eyes as she sits in the bathtub
feeling the water abandon her legs
as it leaks down the drain
in the house whose big windows face south

sucking in sunlight
expanding the rooms
where her Father cared for the plants
when he lived here, touching the dirt

to see what they needed, the roots of the aloe
suspended in baskets of hand-knotted twine
crowding the panes, pots heavy with water
stems curved by the weight of the leaves

chewed by the cat who slept on the shelf
swayed by books next to the mugs
stained with coffee, cracked by the stove
loaded with slabwood from the forest out back

crammed with trees that scratch the sky
bloating with snow
seen by the girl who sits in the tub
naming each thing in the house

to make things stay
while she waits for her Mother to take her
to the bed swollen with pillows

as white as the claw-footed, sparkling, stainless, white,
polished, porcelain
tub that does not

hold water, the bathtub that holds nothing.