

CAROLINE MISNER

## THE BATH

For nearly twenty years I've held this post:  
empress of an asylum, walled  
in pink porcelain, a faucet  
cracked at the roots when  
a maid leaned her weight  
into it, soap scented with exotic  
flowers I can't pronounce.

I burrow beneath heaps of foam,  
crumpled mountains steeped in mist,  
summoning the courage to slide  
under and drown, so that  
I can reset my jigger  
and be grounded for a time.

The froth, like the stale snow  
mounded round the gutters  
this March night. The window  
blinds are open to accept the moon  
the way a small egg is accepted  
in the bowl of a spoon.

Through that one bright eye,  
stiffened limbs hoard their buds,  
and pause while I contemplate  
what I should do next.  
The purr of the wind  
carries the denseness of the night.