

1973

Spring Cleaning

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SPRING CLEANING

In the photograph, you are twenty-two.
You have stepped out from straw shadows,
like a bird on yellow feet,
into the eye of a camera,
my mother
considering how to smile.

On my bureau you live again—
a girl full of smells
and a dark water.
In my room all Spring, you marry.
You eat spoons.
Children break from you
like bubbles.
You are singing too loud.
Father cracks his throat
on your thigh.
A white needled wind
stings the crocus.
You choke on your knuckle.

Here Mother,
I give back your cider hair,
hoary wrists and plum belly.
I give back your breasts.
They have lumps in them.

O, Now it is me.
Twenty-two Springs.
Lime trees sift their butter.
In the mirror, I am in love with my hips.
You are knocking through the years,
through the steamy showers, saying:
“Hurry up, dear. Please come out.”

The sun bursts its pod.
I will hide under my knees.
I will roll up my shadow.
Coming, Coming . . .