

*I Can't Stop Seeing Flies*

I can't stop seeing flies  
and small hairs on my shoulders  
and the shoulders of things without shoulders  
like bleached tablecloths at coffee shops  
that have by now long closed  
and on the ears of my lover  
though it's been months  
since I've seen his ears.

I stay up thinking it's legitimate  
to collapse the night finding  
a way to translate absence  
and I come up with valleys  
without their mountains and the black seeds  
of watermelon in winter  
and I wait for the words  
that do not come.

I once told him I would leave this life  
if I knew what came after  
but in truth I would hate to squander  
the skin I've learned  
to make hairless  
and so far my research  
into the music of graves  
shows nothing.

It's true I used to rub soap  
on my thighs at four  
used the lame edge of a plastic knife  
to scrape off the foam  
and the fibers limp beneath it  
but in truth it was far too early

to translate mother  
and in truth the soap didn't work.

The night catches me staring  
into the edges of doors like a woman  
eternally trying to remember  
her younger face  
but blinking only flies blink back.  
When I wake it is on a pillow of stone  
mountains from home  
my shoulders bare and slack. ♪