

Sara Elkamel

Nile Nuptials



*In the morning, the bride is convinced the water
will reject her. Her empty bed ravaged by sunlight,
she stands by the window, smoking her last cigarette.*

BRIDE:

Something is breathing outside but I don't know what. My body has never before glistened this way. The hair is thick as the eyelashes of a beast; I flap it down & up & down again. After I swallowed sugar to clean my insides, I slept in a river of my mother's tears — maybe this morning, I will not bathe. & anyway, my groom is a body of water. Be a thing He desires, they've said since I sucked on my thumbs like stripped sugarcane. What does water desire? Despite my confusion, I've tried to imagine. I've always struggled with touching myself. Only ever fantasized about the possible. Once, I began to fantasize I was half woman/half ibis, but outside my thighs, the brain of my fingers froze. I rinsed my hands; I returned the bird to the sky. Now my palms hover like dousing rods inches from my skin. Now water waits.

*Unable to imagine the body of god, the bride recalls her lover,
the musician. Standing with her half-weeping parents at the
island's edge, she closes her eyes.*



*In the span of a fantasy, the woman is gone.
The music that plays is a guessing game.
Her parents stand holding a dress with no bride in it. ♪*