**cerdos**

and yeah, it’s easy for you to be called enigmatic

some sort of eloquent fragility wrapped in antici-

pation. but what about the rest of us who can’t be

rough-around-the-edges. the us that has to accept

that we are an us. the us that washes pigs in soap

and hopes our mom was only half right. *lavar*

*cerdos con jabón es perder tiempo y jabón* she

pleads. but we walk down gravel roads with love

in one hand and a bucket in the other. and after

all that, she still bends down to kiss our mistakes.

she has to die but the pigs won’t, they grow fat

and we grow melancholic. to each their own we

accept but we still wonder if it really had to be

this way. before we speak we stand on the quay

with our fingers intertwined and our eyelashes

ill-defined and righteous against our brows. and

for a moment we touch noses and face west. we

wonder why we had to be a we, an us, equipped

with soap and lives others have already lived.

and for a moment these lives are nothing but our

lives, new lives, ones that found us in the womb,

with our eyes half-wide and whole. and then the

moment ends, and there are pigs. they look

through us with wide eyes, past us, into and over

us. they aren’t a they. we count each one, quick,

and it takes us an eternity. when we finish they

don’t face us, they disappear entirely, we feel their

snouts, each warm breath depraving the hair on our

necks. we don’t want to say it but we do anyway

*maybe it isn’t so bad, maybe we could get used*

*to it.* but then we remember that mom hasn’t died

yet, she was here once before. we find her feet

under our own, her slippers ripped but still warm.

it’s her time now, she doesn’t want to go but we

can’t let her stay. the pigs return, they always do,

we hate them but they give us certainty. we don’t

know who we’d be if it weren’t for them, who we

would clean, if we would even need to hold soap

and buckets. we don’t want to be a we any longer,

but what choice do we have. we have each other,

we have the pigs. and for a second, it feels like love.

# **moon water**

over my lips there is a rod we fish for purpose,

we think about artificial intelligence

alternate realities of us

we wonder if we would be happier there

prettier there

if there is some salt and pepper

pro bono man

who could bring us weight

and then some justice and peace

we’ve never known either

just loads of never-minds

a reminder that two days is

longer on venus than it is on earth

and the opportunity

to loll in porcelain bathtubs

filled to the rim with

moon water

shards of glass

heat

# **souls were sent**

souls were sent off to space in biohazard bags.

hearts were shot up with hormones and

stood as globs of gmo waste in landfills.

on the coast, strings were placed tangled at

the base of our only throat, such that we

would know real triumph. bustling young men

ran into other non-bustling not young men

and thought nothing of it. we knew

then that there was never triumph. the day

we learned how to grow herbs on mars, our

souls made the soil fertile and rich, our

hearts displayed as decoration at the

mandatory cotillion, the celebration of our

manners became our god. the real god sat

on a throne of throats and looked to his

god for comfort. there was a circular succession

of gods, what was that word again? it slinks

in the shadows, at bus stops it lingers and on

buses it wills itself to be. a childhood best friend

lost in what-could-have-beens becomes nothing

more than a placeholder. nothing less than a

buffer to hold something sweet. and there is

a great sadness to that, an outside joy, one

that is touched but never felt. and stuck in time

and space are clocks and fields of grass

and gnats. and the one constant is mars, mars

is not stuck. mars just is, and we are just, too.