

Epistemology

Monica Wendel

I dream of water, and pools, standing on my tiptoes
and tilting my chin up to break the surface. I know
I'm supposed to love rivers, but I don't. I only love
great open expanses that throw up carcasses before us
as offerings or sacrifices.

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Tuesday evenings we drop off bread at the Grove –
bags of it, drops condensing inside the plastic
when it has been sealed still steaming.
No matter how many times we go,
they must look at us first through the two-way mirror.

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His family moves around the house like
chess pieces: a limping knight, a slow, almost-
crippled king, the queen appearing where
one least expects her. And no board but the sound of the TV.

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Horseshoe crab, I will never know your suffering.
Ancient body, ancient shell. What have we done
by lying next to you, unknowingly, and making love?