

Sleepwalking

a burning haibun after torrin a. greathouse

once, as a little boy I tried on my mother's high heels & never took them off. as a little boy, I held my mother's hands, rolled her rosy flesh through my fingers like precious stones under the halo of her lamp & I can admit this is how I learned to breathe. I watched her braid her hair like silk through a loom & make real my misplaced girlhood. as a little boy, I prayed not to be. I wanted to be just like my mother. the origin of wanting is always a dream about something we can't have. maybe the dream is that I walked until my feet cracked like sheets of dried clay, or until I made it to my reflection. & so what if it's a dream where I walk into my mother's skin & leave with her name. as a little boy, I turned into my father. I broke the mirror & misplaced myself. I spend my days dancing through shattered glass. my mother tells me I have his nose, his cruel eyes & hands. as a little boy, I prayed not to be. now, I walk through my mother's skin & leave only with her creaky joints. it is hard to tell which bones are mine to keep.

//

once, I tried on my mother's heels
I held my mother's
hands under the halo
this is how I learned to
braid my
misplaced girlhood. little boy, I prayed
to be my mother. the origin of
a dream we have.

//

little boy, I walked
through mother's skin with her joints.
these are mine to keep.