"For Want of Water"

an ant will drown himself, his body submerging
   into ease, his mandibles, head, antennae, baptized. How lovely
   to lose your senses to the cup of your want. A boy
   drags his mother’s body across the desert, her fluids rising
   to heaven in order to quench her skin. How divine
   her body must have looked, clutched at the ankles, her
arms reaching out in exultation, her head stippled in rings
   of sand and blood as he walked with her, slowly, her fallen
   and moving shape the fork of a divining rod, her body shaking
   with each of his steps, and for water, shaking to find
   that deep and secret tributary. I have dreams of letting go
   of water, of waking my lover to a bed of my urine
as my brother did to me, his thin limbs shaking to discover
   the shame of his inside self. And what did we know that to have
   an inside wet enough to free was luxury? The boy
   walks with his mother—he is only thirteen—the age I learned
   to stroke on the toilet the blood off my fingers, and he can-
   not cry, because to cry would mean the waste of his own
wetness, to cry would mean to stop, to think, to differentiate
   the liquids moving down his face, to cry would mean
   to cry, so he goes on, and—this is a common story, the boy
   is not a boy now but every boy we have ever known—people
   find him, they help him to lift his mother onto their hands,
   their necks, they lift her to their own dark and desperate
dryness, and they make it, yes, when they make it over the border
   to a mall parking lot, they lay her down, they fall with her
   body as a clump of bodies behind a city
   dumpster, and people make calls from behind windows, not
   to the immigrants with the dying core, but to the police, who come
   with their handcuffs and call her dead. No. To call
would be to give her life a name. Roundness to where there are
   now only angles. To call would be to remember all
   the other times that he has called for her, and the boy plugs his
   ears, shakes his head, doesn’t know that he cannot physically
   produce tears anymore—such thirst can rid us of these symbols—
   only that now there are mouths around him calling other names
as men run and other men give chase, because how much do you need
   to give up in order to stay? a boy? a mother? your land and inner
   land? Nothing. Nothing can be given, and he will remember
   nothing as he sits in a cell waiting for his sister to come to release
   him from his cellular pain. He will only remember water, that want
   for the clouds to let go their rain, and how seeing
   them dropping, he kept pulling forward, their bodies steady towards that
   dark, uneven line.