Weighing In

By Rhina P. Espaillat

What the scale tells you is how much the earth has missed you, body, how it wants you back again after you leave it to go forth into the light. Do you remember how earth hardly noticed you then? Others would rock you in their arms, warm in the flow that fed you, coaxed you upright. Then earth began to claim you with spots and fevers, began to lick at you with a bruised knee, a bloody shin, and finally to stoke you, body, drumming intimate coded messages through music you danced to unawares, there in your dreaming and your poems and your obedient blood. Body, how useful you became, how lucky, heavy with news and breakage, rich, and sad, sometimes, imagining that greedy zero you must have been, that promising empty sack of possibilities, never-to-come tomorrow.

But look at you now, body, soft old shoe that love wears when it’s stirring, look down, look how earth wants what you weigh, needs what you know.

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