

TERRI WITECK

## Myth Version

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So last night I had this dream. It was cold and really, really dark and I'd been sleeping but something had woken me up. I could hear a sound like waves on the beach and a sound like a train. Then it seemed like people were outside the house. The waves were people trying to get in and the train was something bad coming. So I woke up the children and I said "We've got to get out." I took them down to the basement where the furnace was and said "We're going to escape through this." It was one of those old coal-burning furnaces—there was a little shovel for coal, I think, and a door on the furnace with raised silver lettering. The door was heavy but I pulled it open and sent my first son in. I leaned my face down close—it was hot—and I watched until I couldn't see him anymore, only the fire. Then I picked up my daughter. She was still a little sleepy so I put her into the flames feet first—the flames made an orange and red ruffle, I remember, on the hem of her nightgown. She started running. I waited. When I couldn't see her anymore either, I climbed in with the baby.

Then the dream changed. It was even darker, and there wasn't any sound. No smell, no color, no sky: you know, it wasn't really a place. Suddenly a white dress hung from the air. It was made all of white feathers and maybe there was a breeze, because it trembled a little. I don't know whose dress it was. But then a voice said, "Morning."

TERRI WITEK

*How to Leave by Changing into a Blue Bottle*

Physalia Physalis—colonial protozoan also called  
Portuguese man-of-war or caravel.

If you're six million years  
in arrears in your travels,  
  
strip to a tingle of filament  
then rainbow and go.

Now, bubble compass,  
learn passion's own trembling:  
  
lean into your windrider's angle  
wild dangle and sting.

You're off-course  
(of course)  
  
and long past the final  
cacophonous wrack lines.

So sail on.  
  
For brothers, summon  
  
a rudderless moon.  
All night the tide's

libidinous rake  
mistakes you for itself.  
  
In this equivalence,  
for once,

a blue much  
  
of touch:  
  
bliss / emptiness.