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# The Evening Light

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WARREN SLESINGER

*The Evening Light*

The horizon holds no lofty notion,  
no mansion in the moving clouds,  
no gate that opens for her to float

on her bosom through the air  
for she does not live there and then  
in her naked skin, but here and now

when she steps out of the shower,  
warm and wet, I kiss her slender neck,  
and smell the perfume from the soap

in the hollow of her collarbone;  
the tile gleams, the air swirls around her,  
and the mirror fogs with steam.

Wholly mortal is my wife  
who does not foresee an afterlife  
and who is not indifferent to her own demise,

and yet, she does not flinch  
when I touch a bone instead of breast  
underneath the skin graft on her chest

as smooth and plain as parchment  
and larger than my hand  
that could not protect her from the knife.

But she is not embarrassed  
by her nakedness, and presses against me  
her other breast while she leans

to wipe away the steam,  
and when I turn, our eyes meet in the mirror,  
and I do not relish the reflection

in that instant  
of misgiving in which she waits  
and wants to go on living.

Others see a brightness in the sky  
and find a higher purpose  
in the evening light, but she does not.

Her eyes merely redden with regret  
at the thought of time passing,  
and yet, she seldom cries

as though she chose  
the uncertainty of life  
as opposed to the uncertainty of heaven.