

## **So it is**

*For Adrienne Rich*

So it is  
that if you're face down, you're drowning.

    And in an inch of bathtub water  
where the clawed feet can't reach you  
it's a proper ocean.

The kind seen on family trips—  
a sweet thing to remember  
as if 22 years were the same as days  
    and the memory was still hot.

So it was  
that burnt-out Ford would drag its wheels  
so you'd never make it out of Baltimore whole.

    And all the roadsigns were warnings.

    And all the workmen were on break  
while their machines huffed diesel  
as they waited for their evening shift.  
But the postcard in your pocket promised an ocean.

    And it was wide

    And it was made for you.

So it went  
like a little tune on the FM.

    And the words were all your own.

    And the melody seemed familiar.

    And you swore you knew the dance.

        But you started out with bad directions.

So it was  
that the exit was hours

    And days

    And 22 years behind you.

        But the years are days here—  
easy on the heart.

Forgiving to the knowing

    And you just know it ain't beatin' right.

    And you just know one exit ain't nothin'  
        but a slip.

So it is  
that if you're face down, you're drowning.

    And an inch of bathtub water seems an ocean deep.

        But the clawed feet can't reach you  
when you've left for the beach.

*-Daniel Martinelli*