

## Shaky the Evidence of Testimony

Don't look at his mouth. The sign of anyone lying  
is to glance at the black hole  
from whence  
and etcetera.

The thing that made me and broke me turns out  
to be motherhood.

I don't mean the hormones or the hapless body  
learning to walk  
tripping over nothing in the carpet  
losing teeth like beads.

Think about Lauren Bacall who pouted through  
half the film; anyone making that face  
in the air where we live would be turned to  
and asked once and for all if she was okay.

Her lips gave exact directions  
her eyes made of glass to look glassy  
but for God's sake, for the sake of the children  
stop with the downturned face.

Are you concerned about something? Your entire  
body resonates with it, glowering, brooding;  
the trick is fight off the opposite of what  
someone better would be feeling. If you are guilty  
then act the opposite, innocence,  
which hates not understanding the undertones  
of old

Letterman, for example. So pretend you get it.  
The hilarity. The infidelity.  
Run from whatever you are really feeling but run

to something intelligent. Don't pretend to know  
nothing. Pretend you wish you knew  
more. If eternal damnation concerns you pretend  
to be thinking, *if only I could achieve it.*  
I talk about the soul as if it were something  
we understood  
as if heaven were a wrong turn for some people  
or the best place ever,  
*you cannot imagine,*  
though literally that's not true. I imagine it full of bed  
bugs wearing tights over their eight legs.  
It won't matter about  
the six legs. It won't matter about the mouthparts  
sucking. I will make them bite tiny flowers  
and keep twenty pairs of short-shorts in buckets;  
my legs will be made of wood shanks and rubber,

knee joints made of silver clocks and every hour  
or so  
the alarms will go off and I'll start running.  
The guilt-edged winged ones can never keep up  
because God made me this way, better and faster  
than the rest. God said to me when I was born  
that I would have good reason to run  
and if I did not stop crying he would give me reason to cry  
harder and he was right as he is always right and did.  
When he was sorry  
I was sorry, too. When he sent me a text I put down  
my phone. This is not the realm of the gods, either.  
Mostly I could not stay still and didn't. I was ready  
to spin through the walls  
and stay the night  
but when I lay in the bed it pushed me back up and down  
the stairs I flew like a cat  
afraid of wolves.

When I was sorry, he was cooking chicken. What did I  
do all day? I held their arms. I kept their blood

in their vessels. That was a good thing but anyone can  
do that kind of thing if they have the stomach for  
the job. I missed my children but they are riding black  
and brown horses. Or white. I don't know.  
Horses the color of the sky. Horses like roses with tiny  
hooves for thorns. That's how pricked a family reunion  
without me looks.

I understand divorce is final and I never wanted anyone  
back once they had made clear how much  
they hated my every move. I was always able to see  
who didn't like me  
but that time I was caught by surprise, my nether  
facilities stitched up after birth  
and my brain in a hammock of fear  
because I just lied. Half of this is false and the other half  
I wish I had already accomplished.

Certainly I knew what was coming and would not or did  
not want that process at the hospital to continue.  
The doctor attending said the baby  
was fine, going as planned,  
but it wasn't and I knew that, too. I knew she was as  
perfect as the first one but that  
her mother was not. That I was going to be blasted  
soon after, that life was going to rip some of the goodness  
from me  
so that the bones that held her would be just that,  
three long bones in the right formation  
but still, even that part of my body knew how to give  
what she needed; the crook of the arm for her head  
and the milk.