

You

are the size of a large strawberry
and around you, I am
world. Quite literally.
My belly is bedrock
and all the night sky.

And though you don't know
the feel of the breeze yet,
I am rain, and all of your weathers.
What light you have
is through my skin.

Now you have ears,
I am a country in progress around them.
In me, strata are formed and exploded.
I am river
and the way all waters move.

Soon, you will be the size of a lemon.
And above you, I will be landscape
where factories hum and small towns fume
and votes are cast
for the wrong kind of people.

Small fruit, you
are my mineral wealth
and you will not be exploited.
My heart is an industry
that never shuts down.

My bad knees are Atlas
supporting the planet, and my hands
are huge ships
that will carry you, sleeping,
into the night, out

into the starlit world.

The Lesbian Guide to Conception.

The moon has not bothered
to set today
but is one small cloud
in a sky like a mile of sea.

She has not seen her first summer
or Autumn yet, or the silver-soft days
of earliest Winter. She might expect
world always grows hotter,

nights ever lighter;
that nothing is ever complete.
She closes her eyes in Liverpool,
wakes in Italy –

all is equally strange.
At ten thousand feet
she's transfixed by her fingers
the astonishing crackle

of plastic and paper.
Clouds stacked higher
than rubble or sugar
lie unnoticed outside the plane.

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So many surfaces
and all of them alive.
Air is wetter than breath
and warm as a bath;

the bright lake is heavy with cold.
Huge birds glide
at knee height
Fish are the colour of flame

and under her feet -
the perfect, mouth-shaped
shape of a stone.
A single boat nods to the waves.

Italy stops in the street
to greet her - "Ciao, Bella!"
She answers, fluent
in the language of water,

the chatter of jasmine and birds.
Italy melts in her mouth, cold-sweet,
wakes her each night
with its heat, sheets wet,

her small back spangled with sweat.
Arms wide,
she blesses the night
as she sleeps.

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How did you go about it?

We climbed alone
to the top
of a very steep hill.
No path.

Not a map or a compass
between us.
We left no word
of our route.

Light greyed,
then faded. Mist fell thick,
and with it, night.
Dark seemed to go on

forever.
Sometimes, we heard voices, caught
occasional glimpses of colour.
We did not recognise a thing.

After several years, it lifted.
Then the landscape breathed in
oh – like this –
and it wasn't our hill anymore,

no, this was a different valley
entirely.
No,
this was a different country.

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How did you – actually – go about it?

Sunday evening. Caught a train
to London. Slept alone.

Woke to the sound
of next door's alarm.

The usual darkness.
Hotel room.
Opened the curtain.
Light poured in.

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How was the birth?

She came to us in December
over a lake of angry water
like a storm
or the first day breaking.

I was broken in two completely
and she –
she was what they discovered
inside me.