

WEEK 1 (Interruption)

The angel is adamant,
rat-face mean—*up yours*
says the finger and so it happens,
the whole run of luck
from the almost-stoning to the stone.

Can't you see she's trying to read?
She keeps her thumb in the book,
thinking she'll get back to it,

but there's a smudge on the edge
of the elongated outline, a fuss
where the doves were erased
except for their crossed tails,

a cornice of sorts that crowns
the usual portals with six or seven
inscrutable characters.

He clears his throat. She
clutches her collar shut, as if
that would do any good.
That alleged yes.

WEEK 30 (Maternity Bathing Suit)

Forget those gilded mamas,
she's a magic marker Venus de Milo

at the open swim, a cellulite bird
of blub and doodles full of words,

A-E-I-O-U and growing
a varicose cosmos

of pantihoseless possibility,
up to her anatomy in irregular stars,

her daisy-decal polka-dot
pliant bingo bottom buoyant enough

to balance an elephantine arabesque
off the ladder, smile

at mister-smug-one shrunk
in his trunks in front of

her flagrant magenta bellyful
of flutter kicks—O shaky bravura—

and drop, splashless,
into water over her head.

WEEK 39 (Blue Nudes)

As if she were a rind pulled back

from a dried-out fruit, crouching with her face on her knees, her
flesh etched and streaked, as if she were disconsolate or

drowned, bobbing by the moorings in a yolky light, her head
dropping below her shoulders

as if bending to wash, a breast hanging beneath her like a bag of
coins, one day shy

of a year since she saw him last, naked on the settee, ready to
yield to the shadows, the leaf and shag, as if she were

found dead, fifty feet from the berm between the quarry and the
neighborhood, her skin mottled and bruised

as if he gripped her so the flesh blanched, then suffused again
with deeper pink, as if

she heard someone come in downstairs and set her book down on
the bed,

cornered, her body a curve to contrast the entablature, as if she were

woken in the blue hour, sweating cold, rising again to attend to a cry,

exposed, only an arm to shield herself, or

cut, torso from limbs, then scissored into shapes—megaphone,
hambone, fortune cookie, tadpole, melon, drumstick, udder, fin—
her body

printed in error, pressed with punctuation, a nipple and a navel,
as if she were

turning an ear toward the door, letting her mind stray

into the afternoon, into an old argument, as if she were

opening her mouth to speak, starting to form

an answer to an unasked question, as if she were

ready to get out and towel off, reconsider, reach over

to straighten the lamp, catch a glimpse of herself in the globe, as
if she were

about to sit up, remember the time, refuse, seize

the pieces scattered on the sideboard, gather her hair again in a
quick twist, as if she were

opening her mouth to absorb the shadow and press it into syl-
lables, ready

to get off her knees, rub out the stiffness and steady herself,

stash a few things in a satchel,

shake off the chill, as if

her body were tensing to rise, as if

she set down her book and turned to hear who was coming.