

CHRISTOPHER HOWELL

The New Orpheus

—for Emma

As though windows had been nailed shut
I look out at the blank insides
of my eyes. Who lives here
in fire so deep it loves the water?
A handful of shells and a peacock moon
lie down in the dark of my arm.
Pins and needles, sorrow and salt: I'm trying
hard to match things up
with their Platonic other shinings.
I need more time for this
place I need to open like a door of rain,
like everything coming down
because of blue saturations of the unforgettable
and too hard to know. I'm giving myself just one
more lifetime of prying and pulling
at my hinges, beating the old empty roses
my daughter walks in, thinking I've been away
too long now, it's getting late, they're slamming
the other world and dousing the lights.
Rain and rain again, old winter. It's really dark
where she is. All night I lie awake
collecting light, sending it on.