

JANUARY GILL O'NEIL

Questions of Sleep

A cough, a tickle,
a sudden rise and froth
at the back of your throat—
something unnamed
dragged you out of bed,
heavy footed A cough, a tickle,
a sudden rise and froth
at the back of your throat—
something unnamed
dragged you out of bed,
heavy footed, into mine.
You curl into me,
all chatter and conjunctions,
little “c” into big “C”
in the loose alphabet
of mother and daughter. Your skin,
infused with shampoo and half-sleep
rests against my grain,
silent as a star, each dip
and swirl of your curls
searching for the right word,
the form of things, how night
wraps its body around day
and asks for nothing but this
small happiness. What keeps us awake,
other than the cheap wall clock