

Daughters

My house is full of blood.
And my daughters, now,
who used to be so cleanly
cleft, so simple, carry
the bit flesh in them,
shark-torn fish trailing
blood in the sea. Even
my tortoiseshell, delicate,
female, yowls when the
blood comes to her, and,
tail up in anguish,
drags her pretty belly
on the ground.

My house is full of breasts,
softly deep and nipping
beneath camisoles or
sweaters. I have to inch
around them. I have to
squeeze by, narrow. They
float above my daughters
in the bathtub, I mean, they
are my daughters' in the
bathtub, pale, warm moons
in a watery sky, they who
suckled me now outdo me.

And though I do not stare,
my house is full of fur.
Already, boys
have touched it.
This, one daughter
tells me, and I think of how,
when she was born,
I stroked her arm so gently,
cherishing the vein-fine
skin, and swore no one would
ever hurt her.



*Detail from "Peter Pan: To the Spirit of Children of Play," by Sir George Framptom.
1929 Replica, Glen Gould Park, Toronto. Photo: Joe Paczuski*