

## Lessons On Hair Removal

by Lenna Mendoza

I.

The water my mother draws for me  
creeps up the unrinsed bath. Her severed leg  
hairs are pulled again from porcelain: first flesh  
and now basin. The hairs wriggle innumerable,  
mosquito larvae rising toward my elbows,  
which pale from bearing my head over the edge.  
Another bottle reeks of white wine. Sunken, I scrub  
until I'm membraned in a sludge of fur and bubbles.

II.

Scratching flush against the meat of the calf,  
the razor has not stalled or slipped in weeks,  
has not ceased gliding, commercial-perfect,  
through white foam, clearing row after row.  
That is, until I slide it into place sideways.  
Then, a sensation at once hot and cold,  
near the tense cord of my ankle. Candy apple  
red between my toes, coursing like water  
through the showerhead, unemptyable.

III.

In the morning, a rash presses against  
the tangled comforter, my shin bumpy and dry  
like a taxidermied alligator. A few flecks of scarlet  
feature in the constellation— blood fossilized below?  
The rash's changes mark passing days. Dark eyes  
have formed on this other side of me in a week.  
I study them like tea leaves, recall legends  
of children hollowed by insects. Stubble  
springs and crumples around the wound.