

## **Cave Behind the Torrent**

My father took me  
to see the immense waterfall  
but I didn't want to go.  
He thought I was afraid but in fact  
I just didn't like waterfalls  
or twilights or mist  
or the approaching roar  
or the long mossy path  
suddenly intuiting a clearing—

I didn't like days  
so when he cleared his throat  
I said 'put me down,'  
when he stumbled  
I said 'carry me'—

he was defenseless  
against my boredom  
for I loved only him  
and the smell of his skin  
and his frayed plaid cuffs  
with their shameless nacre buttons.

I loved his loneliness,  
how thwarted his love of me  
was, how I could channel it  
and turn it off: the wall of water  
glittering like stone  
was just more prevarication.

The State had built a roped-in platform  
from which to view dissolving rainbow wisps.  
We stopped there. I cried.  
He asked why. I cried louder,

and that was that twilight:  
Why? *Wail*. Why? *Wail*.  
Roar of current, little laminated captions  
explaining the falls: gallons per second:  
vertical drop: significant pioneers.

As my father read this information  
I wriggled from his arms  
and ran through the wall itself—  
it was amazingly light

and there on the inside  
I mimicked his voice  
crying my name, and the voice of water  
crying the Name itself.

When he fought his way  
bitterly, warily, through the scrim,  
I was just a little ball of hate—

since he was still living  
I could not know  
I was mad with happiness  
and the gate of radiance  
had opened at one touch.