

Mirrors

I once thought mirrors could only reflect
my own image back to me, but I was wrong.

As a child, I'd sneak into the bathroom,
rise up on my tiptoes,

and lift my grandmother's hand mirror
off the highest shelf.

At first, I glimpsed my frayed and sweat-stained
nightgown, but after a while

distant worlds came
into relief: a blue feather

atop a scale; begonias
blooming in clawfoot tubs.

Some days, I'd see a girl
jumping rope and tiny hot air balloons

skimming the frame's edge-turned-sky.

Years later, when my sister stepped off a train
after a summer away,

so thin, so unrecognizable,

I held up a mirror.

Not so she could see
the body she had learned to hate,

but to offer up another view:

of clouds rippling across salt flats,

of sweet onion cradled in dirt,

of waterfalls backlit by fire.

I divvied out these scenes out in grams,
and gifted them to her, one

by one, spoon by spoon,

so she'd not be toppled by their weight.