

soaking wet

Samantha E. Lioi

the sun is taking forever
to burn out:

in the front room thick with curtains,
light floods the edges of my eyes.

Cracked like
winter knuckles,
believing myself uncrackable,
I stand in a swift stream,
knees arching
in rush of water.

I fear a falling
over smoothed rocks
downstream.

Adjusting my foothold
I remember
watching Lois take gently,
one by one
from a cardboard box

prayers in clay,
hardened by time and exposure,
shaped by her hands.

I remember
when her voice cracks—
cradling a pale creation, touching
its chalky rose skin, telling
a memory: daughter, leaving
home.

Her palm follows carefully a curve of holding,
releasing. I
open with her.

and behind
and before me the evening gathers:
Open-handed, bare trees
stretch silhouettes into the blue deep.

These mornings I wake up clenched it's
a matter of time and I no longer wish to lift one foot,
the other, dragging,
dragging through water.
Soon, I will
follow the current to its falling.

Yet even praying
for only what is needed
to lift my planted feet,
I hope for some knobby branch
on the way down,
something to be grasped
should I find I said yes
too easily.

But the way is smooth
and smoother as it goes
gurgling, to its source.

The rust-blaze has slipped away westward,
and I wonder if passersby see the crack open
and close as I breathe.

I am learning longer silences,
listening for a familiar breath in the dark.

And there are voices there is music
on this current,
throats opening
in laughter,
and the water lapping my legs saying
not alone, not alone—

Let the silence lengthen—

I am praying
I am praying
and standing I am
still, standing
and still I am standing staring down
at my soaking wet feet—

About the poet

Samantha Lioi feels alive when words heal and delight, bringing honesty and beauty in place of control, alienation, and decoration. Samantha will complete an MDiv at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (Elkhart, Indiana) in May 2010, and is eager to continue finding the love of God in words and people and song.