

EMILIA PHILLIPS

Clepsydra

Into the bath drawn cold for fever
I lower myself until the water covers all
but my breasts, eyes, & nose—
one o'clock, & I imagine B's body
now in the chamber where a magnet
will skim her ashes for screws, bone
fasteners, & crowns. On the plane,
the boy behind me asked why

I was wearing the blue mask
& held a cup of ice to my neck
& wrists. *Pressure points*,
I said but didn't explain.
At security my bags & body—
searched. *Why are you traveling?*

Why are you flushed? A pacemaker
explodes in the fired
chamber. But the heart slows
in cold water, the fever drawn
out of the body—hot to cold,
hot to cold. In the terminal,
waiting for the next flight out,
I studied the magazine

cross-section of Al-Jazari's elephant
clepsydra in whose hollow body
a bowl continually fills, becoming
heavy with each hour. Underwater
I hear slow breathing,
far off as someone else's.