

Anti-Aging Serum

In my new smile line there is a creek bed
and in it my grandmother is on her back
and she is young again, her skin the yellow
glow of the new dawn, her eyes a hazel
forest. My daughters are the little gray rabbits
on the shore—furry and unwashed, wide
eyed as the sky, which is brightening now,
across my face, fanning out with age.
The woman above me clearing my pores
can't tell how old I am. She says I've been
exfoliating so much that I've thinned
myself. She can see all the canals
and women I carry in me, the knowledge
of each one before she was turned
into a wife, before she was made to lie
down in the cold water, so deep it covered, how
the stones lift us just so our heads
are above. We can see what we were:
whether hare or new doe, whether
boy in the bushes watching, whether knife,
whether sky. And now I say, when I try to look,
someone is always calling me out of myself,
as a farmer calls in the dog. I am meant
to be thoughtless, to wear my face
and to mind it like a cultivated land,
but even as I fight back the forest it's coming.
I'm lined. No one is looking at me,
and one day, they'll stop looking. I'll go back
into the woods near the house where
I was born, take off this body, and even
my husband will smell what I've been,
the musk of a mouse in a shoe box,
just that. The smell of turning back.