

## Heresies

The angel guiding my birth worried  
my translation from ether to matter  
got messed up, not all the spiritual  
found its molecular box making me  
a present delivered half unwrapped,  
a messy job

--if you feel awkward a lot, the angel  
whispers, think of it as exposed soul  
running for cover. A minor defect,  
doesn't warrant returning for exchange!

Maybe if you'd taken the exchange option  
you'd have turned out better balanced.  
Maybe if the sky were always blue  
and the rivers flowed with milk and honey.

But, as it is now, the morning bus to work is filled with legs,  
bosoms, bottoms, smells

—My God, you ask, are all these smells part of your plan?

The sky outside hangs over the city  
like a heavy iron lid covering a pot.  
We bubble. We simmer. We melt  
into a humid paste. Hope an ingredient  
thrown in to add flavor. In a witch's  
cauldron, hope would be a live bat,

wings broken. The stink of its terror  
permeating the potion.

Nervous, angry people wait at the bus stop.  
They are dangerous and crafty.  
Like spiders. They weave their odors  
into webs around each other.  
Rain adds more liquid, more smells.  
Everyone sweaty, damp. They are sticky,  
they are ready to be skimmed,  
residue rising to the surface  
when the pot is stirred.

—God must be asleep!, my grandmother used to say, so tired from  
His work and here we are having to squeak by until He wakes up  
and sets it all right.

She laughed at the idea of being descended from fish or monkeys.  
She thought man was shaped out of the soil in an unbroken  
succession of castings.

Ancient heresies passed across campfires and then kitchen tables  
for generations. A sin to think, much less say.  
Maybe like me there was spirit left over  
when she was made that never found its molecular container  
and then there's the devil to pay.