

Half of Everything



Half flooded by her advancing cancer,
my mother stands like a false Christ
who believes she can yet walk on water,
believes the pills she takes will be enough

to staunch the sea rising around her.
If she wears her finest dress and jabot,
if she keeps her hair combed and dry.
if she just stands still long enough,

hands folded, forever proper, civilized,
submerged table set for morning tea,
she can go on believing, as she has,
the world is only a fraction of what it is.

Already she's turning back into the girl
who could not face my father's alcoholism,
or her son's sadness, or any deluge,
only clear skies and cumulous clouds.

If she ignores half of everything,
she thinks without ever thinking it,
her last half doesn't need to go under
and she can find a way to fly home.