

I Pray to the River

Jennie Duguay

There is a bruise on my back that will not heal.
I keep it in my Cupboard of Precious Things
and with my back to the mirror,
while I wait for it change colour,
I pray.

Not for a chorus of blues — royal, cerulean, teal, little paint tins toppled over,
the moment the sky suddenly clears.
Not for a sunset of crocus, tulip, azalea,
not even for white bones set out against
every shade of brown —
bark, dry leaves, pine needles,
a Potion of Forest Floor.

I take my bruise from the shelf and walk to the river,
aggressive today with a week of rain.
I watch myself undress,
reveal my Skin of a Thousand Thorns.
The river will fix it
says the bruise.

I won't be there to say,
when the sky clears and the sun sets
and the river throws my white bones in the air,
if it could be for joy.