

Restored

I saw you there the night before,
a leggy black pearl against
the glossy white tub,
and made note:

Spider. Remove before showering.

And the next morning remembered
too late,
and bore your sodden body to
the sunny deck rail where I
had meant to leave you, alive.

And lay you there gently, lifted
and lay you again,
shedding the water, and
once more, carefully.

Extended the fine filaments
of your eight legs, blew softly
on your corpse with sorry breath

that could not stir movement in the damp
mound of your perfect drowned body,
the book lungs and tracheal tubes
swamped and still.

And went back inside for a time,
wishing it otherwise, the day
barely underway and already
a hundred small wonders
dead all around, dead of
carelessness or meanness,
dead of forgetfulness.

Then wished to see you once more, even
lifeless on the rail,

where instead you now stood,
poised on segmented limbs,
your dry, risen body
shining in the sun,
your eight eyes again open

to the immense world,
your small pedipalps circling your hungry mouth,
and then walked away, restored, before I could ask:

Was there a white light?

Did you see them?

Did they greet you, ancient and familiar?
The mother who guarded your egg sac,
silken and tough, the siblings who
ballooned on gossamer into perilous air --
the ones who died before you, taken

by animals or
elements, by
indifference or cruelty,
by karma or kismet.

Did they fix you with
a thousand happy gazes, wave
their many legs in recognition, in
jubilation, welcoming you home, home
from a life where every moment a hundred
small wonders die, unseen and unmourned?

And in all their rejoicing, were they half
as glad, half as glad as I --
to feel one needless harm undone,
to watch the leggy black
pearl of your body walking
back into the world?