

### *The Born-again Mermaid*

She remembers more than anything else  
just how compact she was at first.  
She was so small, as small as an angel in a troop  
of angels congregating on the top of a pin,  
or one of the souls of the dead  
who are known to be as thickly  
and droopingly hovering in our midst  
like midges, scads of them fitting  
into the drops of dew that cling to a single blade of grass.

Then all of a sudden she was BIG, BIG,  
walking effortlessly through high marble halls  
in the direction of the light; shuffles of pleasure and  
shudders of apprehension  
were hitting her in alternating waves.  
She remembers this is her actual physical makeup  
and not in her head. It's a muscle memory  
rather than a mental one. The pins and needles start  
in her fingers and toes and twinges of pleasure  
and fear together sweep up through her body  
till they hit her in the head.  
She's very agitated.  
There's something very unearthly about this sensation.  
It's not natural, not connected with this world.  
Surreal, perhaps, is the best term for it.  
'Unheimlich,' as the Germans would say.

She doesn't need to take part in holographic therapy sessions  
to summon this basic primal memory.  
She already feels it through and through, in her soul as much  
as her body.