

Frotté

Blonde girl,
Just gone eighteen,
In light, white, crocheted dress.
Through the small holes, white bra, G-string.
Dancer?

White-blonde.
The dress stretches
And contracts like music.
As the tram rocks, she moves. Below,
All leg.

These end
In plastic pumps.
White, of course, and shiny.
Thick, three-inch heels. Rocking away,
Just think.

She looks,
Then looks away.
Looks again. Turns, adjusts
Posture, crosses legs, wets lips, leans
Forward,

Showing
A deep chute of
Taut, sand skin. The tram stops.
She brushes past. This is where I
Get off.

Invitation to a Tsunami

This woman tells lies. She says that sometimes
 a tidal wave will run up the river
 from the sea, covering Paris with several feet

 of seawater, but they always clean it up
 by morning. Strangely, she looks like you,
 all laboratory science and quiet beauty,

 and yet she insists the two don't mix,
 that the river enters the channel like a heartworm,
 cutting a separate path through the mud and brack

 and that the flood is the ocean's revenge.
 She says the river's flow spells out
 the word for love in Old French

 and that the men who sail above that current
 often drown themselves in madness and joy,
 eternally wishing for shared passion

 with a beloved gull or patch of seaweed.
 She adds that a fig tree won't bear fruit
 until it's pruned, and that the results

 are the tree's tears. Who am I to say
 she's not well? She seems to speak
 a kind of pidgin truth when she claims

 the river is so dirty we'd need a hundred injections
 if we ever got the courage to jump in, adding
 that even if we stare at it for long

 we might take ill. But imagine if one day
 from the number six métro's
 narrow bridge over the Seine,

 I saw a single paper sheet
 floating face-up on the water's surface,
 and from it read your name out loud

as it passed under me, and I over it,
 imagine if my muttering
 would be heard above the rattle

of the train—think what sort of rift
 it could open up, deep in the seabed,
 and how many cities might be washed away

by that flood of remembrance and regret?