

## Cepheus

My chamberlain, his minions . . . robing me, poking  
and fussing, what colour today? Does it matter?  
Clothing my leathery buttocks with silk, scraping  
my thin poor hair with ivory, weighting my yellow  
feet with brighter kidskin: they bring me here -  
here, where there's nothing but these shapes of grey,  
grey birds bred off grey stones, and the eternal disobedient  
lashing waves.

I see her, my daughter, standing -  
remember the flood of water at her birth that terrible  
stain her mother's scream that tore at me her  
wiry cry tiny thrashing arms and suddenly calm  
between us her eyes my eyes making a bargain  
- she seems too big she is shining. Water  
and pearls are on her body, I want to see,  
I don't want to see - my daughter  
naked, a woman naked, am I seeing her  
with my eyes or with my body? I am seeing  
for the first time, her hair, her breasts -  
her eyes glare across water, time -  
all promises broken.

He is coming. Air shifts, the water  
lifts, she, twisting her head screams  
her mouth scarlet raw, just  
a terrible noise as if  
it is in my head only, telling me  
what I have always been.