

Issue of Blood

Twila Newey

Last night she lay in bed and read the men's words while blood flowed
and spread like a petal, pooled and ached, red as stymied truth.

Every woman from twelve to sixty could have told them life is
mutable, if they would have asked her—a flutter, a gush, a
screaming love

Born and born and born again. The bloody mess of life and death
transmuting every twenty-eight to thirty-two days. She could
have said

Take this my body, a thousand times over, moaned to all the
potentialities and loss that grew inside her sometimes bodied,

sometimes round as her story ending. Each month reminding her of
this blood a covenant which is poured out for many. But they were
asleep again

in the garden or climbing another mountain in search of finch or
flaming bush. Classifying, prophesying with *I am* always before
them

Her, *a broken open alabaster jar* filled with the *precious ointment of life
and death*, anointing and blessing, anointing and

There are three alternate endings to her story:

1. She smells of unused spices and silent fear
2. She says only what he tells her to say
3. She bears all and they don't believe her

A woman bled for twelve years without ceasing, in seconds, she became miracle.

A dead twelve-year-old girl rose up and pooled her life in her own new hands.

Still they said blood is unclean and death is death. Ending number three then.

The *good news* is we are intimates with liquidity.

The *good news* is that the ground has never been solid.

The *good news* is all these stories are only old strands of thought.

4. The widow tosses her *small copper coins*. *This is but the beginning of birth pangs.*