

Woman Bathing

Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

*And if a woman have an issue . . . [of blood], she shall be put apart seven days;
and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean. . . .*

Leviticus 15:19

She performs the persistent ritual of cleansing,
the splashing of water
upon her scarlet apple flesh
sullied with blood
to expunge the sins the fathers shout.

But can she wash away the distorted reflection,
the accusing leather-bound memorabilia,
she sees in the water you lend,
the rancid water pooled in stained basins
colored with jaundiced eye?

Authority

Protected
in the womb
of your mighty power
I remain.

My dependence
feeds you.

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