

Blessed Virgin

Diana Dean

Leda, when Helen leapt
in your womb was it
like this? Ankles swollen
under the weight
of a dove? The gift of
God nauseates,
spasms my body with tears
and pain. I bear the cross
looks of judgment
from my husband.

You felt a Swan
quake. Why couldn't I
have felt that
touch: fingers tangled
in hair, as rocking
crescendos to chaos
of nerves, ripping
a prayer from my lips?

That prayer presses down
on my hips; my husband
stares at my swollen
body beneath unstained sheets.