

God the Mother Speaks of Salt

Dayna Patterson

I baptized you before you were born. After, rubbed you clean.
I'll cleanse all your wounds in season. You've forgotten
how to savor my holy. If you seek,
you'll find these veins

run deep. See my face in the cliffs, taste my milk
in the sea. You've made a covenant with me—
never to be broken. Witness
my abundance, crystals crusting the pits. In season,

your wounds I'll salve. When I say *of the earth*,
I mean all my children—animal, vegetal—reflected in
my multihued skin: black, pink, blue, grey, red.
So pass me from hand to hand

at the table. I'll preserve your good
works in time. Plant pillars to mark
daughters I rapture. Each hurt I'll scour, each wound
wash clean. Come judgement, every creature will crave

my salvation—all are mine
to weigh in the clear grain of my eye.

DAYNA PATTERSON is the author of *If Mother Braids a Waterfall*, winner of the 2020 Association for Mormon Letters Poetry Award. Her second poetry collection, *O Lady, Speak Again*, is forthcoming from Signature Books in 2023. She is the founding editor in chief of *Psaltery & Lyre* and curates Poetry + Fungus in her spare time. daynapatterson.com.