The Ice Cave

For Rachel, after the death of her young daughter

She is living here now, where the cold is her consort, the lover she clasps with her arms and legs, from whose gray blanket she tears each breath.

All around her, ice is in bloom—tiny glass buds keep swelling from hairline fissures in the stone. The buried river cuts close, a dark ventricle thick with sorrow. Moisture floods her face, pools at her feet. In time, a tower of ice will grow around her, taking the shape of an old woman and visitors will say, Look at her, how she weeps into her hands.