

RISHMA DUNLOP

July 18

for Rachel

I heard the lifting of eyelids,
Saw the blue of your temples,
And reached out at dawn—

when I saw you torn from me
I saw you in your own death
and in mine,

and that moment of your birth
unsealed the house of memory
and became all our remembered hours.

They go with me in the endless, measured light,
like the songs I sang to you—songs heard in the
winds and lakes and rivers of your childhood,

heard in the days I walked you to school,
syncopated by your skipping and singing—
red-ribboned ponytail slapping the morning air

and the slap, slap of sockeyed salmon
swimming upstream to spawning beds,
heard in your mother's voice

that delivers you to the possible
everywhere
like a cross above your bed.