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my mother learns how to fly

she absent-mindedly steps  
off the terrace into the radiant  
summer night and vanishes  
mouth puckering as if to warble . . .

her friend and I pick her up  
among mashed begonias  
one wrist snapped swelling fast  
she smiles through the grimace

as if her great three-yard voyage  
had introduced her to some strange  
lore or science we cannot grasp:  
what light learns inside the kaleidoscope

or water from its sorrowful boiling  
some subtle yet sustained change  
that leaves her hanging from our arms  
but already journeying toward far-off

Italy whose bridges dream in their stone  
sleep whose churches disgorge life-sized  
gold reliquaries full of papal bones  
whose phrases slide down the throat

like the sweetest bitter chocolate  
a land no travel agency dares to advertise  
and which eludes the eyes behind our eyes  
a dot on a stone map in a very old tongue

Marie C. Jones



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## somatic

my mother broke her arm  
again at the hospital the doctor  
talks about pins and surgery  
one month maybe two  
but I can't hear him his mouth  
moves like the giant maw  
of a drab green crab  
I'm so deaf and dumb  
I would know this dusky  
room IV stand to be a dream  
had I not cleaned my own hair  
by the handful from the shower  
drain this morning

so I sit as she lies waiting  
for metal to mend her bones  
for summer or for fall  
for a giant crab to send her home  
I sit pressed by blind luck  
and time – which strings  
digital fire ants hurrying  
toward some obscure errand  
on the other side of the light  
or wherever seconds flee  
when more seconds evict them  
from the warm nest of the hour  
one by one

Marie C. Jones

Marie C. Jones is a poet, teacher, & translator. She earned a Ph.D. in Creative Writing (University of North Texas, 1999). Chapbook: *Love Song, with Mass Extinction* (Oil Hill Press, 2003). Poems have appeared in *Denver Quarterly*, *Atlanta Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and other journals.