**Facing Myself**

Lorrie Ness

After a scalding shower,

blushing skin camouflages rosy scars.

I am washed—

Naked,

with a cataract of steam,

blunting my sight. Feathering

jagged edges.

The mirror opposite the curtain—

inescapable.

I will myself to look.

Press my finger to the foggy glass,

its flesh spreading like thighs on a metal chair.

I recoil—

A pupil of vibrant colors

pierces the haze where my finger touched.

Expanding like an iris in dim light

when I lean close.

Constricting

as I pull away,

palms gripping the sink rim.

Searching for the perfect aperture

to erase my seams, spotlight smooth skin.

Tuck tender parts

into the fog.

I’m still learning to see—

Occasionally running for cover,

blurring the pupil with my hot breath

when I’ve had enough.