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AJA MCKINNEY

There is something different
in my winters
My year long Decembers
Faced to remember
I paint my toes three times a
week
I cover my whole body in
peach lotion
Sensuous motion
I comb my hair with genital
care
My myself I'll have a love
affair.

Aja McKinney's poetry appears earlier in this volume.

SHIRLEY ADELMAN

My Father

My father, whose hands I loved, square,
strong, soft and fleshy, did not touch me,
except to bathe me in too much hot water,
in too high a tub. And I feeling very naked
and fat, with breasts that were not yet
breasts, was afraid of drowning in a big,
down under splash.

In that room white and slippery, I stood,
my father wiping me down like I was some
other thing, a sink or toilet maybe.
Hot with shame, I felt my face burning.

My father who took cast-offs from his sons,
unwanted ties and handkerchiefs, bottles of
too fragrant lotions, talcs, soaps, and cheap
cuff links...

Crayons, so many blues: navy blue, violet
blue, blue-green, turquoise blue, all in a cigar
box that smelled of tobacco. In my room, I
drew bright pictures, flowers, parks, houses,
my name on the bottom right in blue, like the
ocean and sky. He never saw.

In margins of school books, on envelopes,
I sketched one house, alone, fenced in,
shaded by trees, with a great door safely
closed.

Shirly Adelman teaches at the Community College of Philadelphia, writing and enjoying the company of her two adult children. Her work has been published internationally.