

—+ **MEREDITH ADOLPH** | A Visit

at Christmas I stare  
and stare at your daughters who  
look so eerily like you.

your older girl seems all right,  
I know you'd be glad. she's a regular  
kid, plays with ponies, laughs in shrieks.  
it's only sometimes I see

the terrible shadow stretching  
out behind her, a skid mark.  
that purple bruise faint under  
her skin, just there.

it's her I worry most about.

but your youngest, crawling  
into my lap, fools me.  
smiles a dark familiar from your eyes.

she hugs so freely  
I'd like to imagine it's you,  
sneaking in to say hello while  
her soul's still malleable

already she has some words, soon  
she'll be no one but herself;  
you'll have to find another way in.