

*Imagine a Dance Audition for
Women with Disabilities*

The power of metaphor left me. I lived in pictures
now. They came to me while I fell back
on the fevered couch settling into
the indentation that curved around my curves.

In imagination I could still dance.
My body complied with years of bourrées and barre work.
Now that I can only imagine, to dance was an escapade.
My body laughs.

I hold an audition. Solely in my mind.
So many come: the woman with one arm,
the woman with no arms, the woman with no
body who dances light as air
through cracks in the broad wood planks of the floor;
knowing we can't accomplish one step out our front doors.

On stage, we beam at this strange world
that hopes to forget us. We survive the mockery
of those who pass our streets; unnoticing us, they proceed.

Our legs trace an arc on the floor
but in the shadow, our dream legs leapfrog over the chandelier.
Someone shouts, casting out verbs
our bodies no longer register, like the word *hurry*.

A 6-foot-high papier-mâché heart
sits center stage. Inside pulses
a series of heartbeats: a baby's quickening
and our own, which we had recorded. We lean
still as butter in a glass dish, barely
setting our toes on the sprung floor.

Then we enter from stage right
to rise up and spear the wind.