

i lived
in the house before this one
for ten months and every two weeks
i said, "i'll take a **long, hot bath**"
but only took one once and now
all i have is a standing shower
but the tiles are beautiful
re-cently re-done
a deep blue two inches
thick they steam
and i play tic tac toe
alone against myself

warmth every inch of me
a **decorating** heat
shower **drains**
doing something with **nobody looking**
doing something i want to do

face-up in bed
in darkness
surrounded by blankets
i dream i'm re-cently re-done too
new body chest drained i'm running
the creek with my shirt off
warmth every inch of me

sunshine behind eyes
wake up holding **my hard-won** body
flick on the oil heater
text danny, "had an elliot page dream
last night we were friends"

i wrote a poem about showers in 2018
but it was too sad to publish

i miss the tub in my old place
but it collected grime too easily
a conduit for rebirth
i would prepare it for bath:
scrub gloveless with bleach
naked shoeless
and that was ablution enough
no need to **shed clothes and float**

weightless in water

steam holds **my hard-won** body now
warmth every inch of me
decorate myself with the weight
of wet fingers
and then **it evaporates**

at first i wore gel on my belly
i couldn't wet it for six hours
but now it's an injection
like antidote
i shower in the morning again

here appears the sun
and the floor appears in **beams**
of fractured light
shining too, like the moon
reflecting light back

i am alone walking
from bed to bathroom to
decorate myself with heat
and water and glow

i am alone walking
my body is mine when
i can go no further

With submissions from Sam Elkin, Maria Guy, Faiza Bokhari, Tasha, Rhonda Cotsell and Montague Cole.