

Two Poems



Mother and Children, Jacob Kainen, 1965

Bath time

I'll keep the soap out of your eyes
As long as I can

Use my hand to hold back the bubbles—
Even if drips trickle through and make you cry,
I manage to stop most of it.

I'm the cardigan to bury your face in
During the scary bits of the film,
The hand to hold when the fairground ride
Spins too fast.

One day I'll want to swipe your phone

Before you read a break-up message
Or stamp that rejection letter into your doormat.
There will be some who won't invite you,
Others who laugh behind your back—
You'll want to fight those on your own, by then.

When I think of all the things I can't protect you from
I remember that today, while I'm here,
I'll keep the soap out of your eyes
As long as I can

Takashi

When the lightning flashed, it reminded her of him:
Eyes that shifted in seconds from warmth to ice.
For years, his shoulders had been boulders up against her,
Icebergs for her to swim around, unsure how deep they went.
Takashi, genki? they'd ask.
And her glance down left would say it all:
Tell me when you find out.