

## Asking for a Friend

When you,  
all lights in the window,  
ancestors in the sitting room,  
spoke shimmering couplets of bottle-cap whimsy,  
did you know they carried blood diamond fortunes?

When I dipped my bleeding plastic feet in your salt water,  
did you mean to sting my toes with all the sweet exhaustion of a familiar kiss?

I gave you steel,  
wood,  
and gold leaf memories—will they suffice?

If I paint my bones and polish my syllables,  
will your stethoscope hear my heartbeat as it augurs distant earthquakes?

I'll turn my face away as your answer returns,  
taking care not to listen to the joy of the one who knows what rain feels like.