She Took Off Her Wings And Shoes

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Published by Utah State University Press

Bishop, Suzette.
She Took Off Her Wings And Shoes.
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She returns the Flemish gown to a redness like the blush of a shy bride at the threshold of church or house, falling in perfect symmetrical folds from her body, released like finely cut rubies from a necklace and scattered at her feet in dismay. She cleans years of soot from the lady’s pale hands and face, from the tiled floor in star patterns, seeing herself reflected in china cups and saucers. As she wanders this room, the lady’s hair moves slightly, her lips move, What do you bring me? She closes her hand over the moth, taking it to the lady; it flutters in her hand like the eyelids of someone just waking and flies out the opened door leaving small feathers on her fingers, in the life-line of her palm. Ashes, absence of color, the sounds of ships through the opened door.