Bathroom Songs: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick as a Poet

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This skin is discrete,
red, and hot, that stretches to
your remotest tender, elastic parts

spreading listless fever.
Our memory stills with fear
secreted in your own mother’s dreams

as dry as a mouth: your rasp of fever;
my rasp, rasp of love.
It is even in your shrinking eye

and I move to remember
the wheeled bed where my mother
looks like a boy, legs akimbo with

hospital apparatus,
irises sliding in a crescent
over wallpaper eyes, drawling gibberish;

I wait for them all to leave, so she will
stop it and speak to me,
but the doctor is leaving directions with

my father, who is, however, surreptitiously
peeking down at the pages of an
absorbing modern novel.

So in childhood and youth, sleeping alone,
we see what the truth is worth,
but still it is sometimes gratifying to

say it anyway. This skin is discrete,
waterproof, and impervious to fever.
Even moving in tender silence
like white whales heaving in play
imitating the lofty Klein bottle
and inside outside, we would be

just here
as the world is a white cave
in which

the red lobsters boil in passion
and grapple slantways, to find
their own remarkable parts.