

Four Dollar Water

I almost drowned when I was young, but I love the water.

I am Noah's wife, unnamed.

My cat sits in earnest on the toilet seat. She watches as I brush my teeth, awaits her chance to swipe at the stream flowing from the faucet. Sometimes she pounces in the shower when I'm in it.

I have a habit of twirling ice cubes in my glass. I enjoy the clicking sounds they make against each other and against the clear, curved highball. I often wish they would not melt.

In restaurants when the waitress returns to refill our water, I think of all the people who never drink it. Some restaurants have relinquished such service; some charge \$4.00 for the decorative bottle.

When I go to dinner with my grandfather, he speaks to an old pal from who-knows-where. They discuss Bob's funeral, Fred's cancer, Louie's bowel disfunctions. I continue to twirl ice cubes, wishing they were melting in something stronger than water.

Today, it's George's heart. His is the fourth death they've discussed.

I wonder why the elderly always insist on conversing about death, near death, or the illnesses of their acquaintances as a means of small talk.

When I turn off the shower, my cat sits beneath the faucet. She bites the drips until she catches one.

"Waitress," I beckon, "more water."