Dreaming My Ancestors

Night after night the dream comes.
   In darkness, sound, a stone
falls, or is thrown --
   it makes no difference. The only sure thing
is that it hits the water. Its ripples travel

for generations, circles of desire
   almost invisible to the naked eye,
widening, widening,
   with the desperate knowledge
they have nowhere left to go, then seemingly

returning upon themselves, an optical illusion
   of visual echoes in narcissistic gloom. My ancestors
surround the lake where we have lived forever.
   The reflection on its surface is my daughter’s,
my mother’s, my mother’s mother’s mother’s,

my own. I gave one daughter my name
   and she ran away with it. I have no tongue now
even for simple words beyond fact of birth
   and circumstantial pain which comprise the sins
of the mother in all of us. In this place, ghosts alone

must eulogize the point of suffering, like a Brueghel
   painting on a museum wall. I dream the face
of a new child born of black water,
   grandchild I will never know,
and pray for a room her ghost cannot enter.