Platonic Idealism  
_for Alison_

We took ballet lessons in a flat above a strip club named “Monday’s” but once Miss Linda touched the copper needle to her ancient record of _Tendu with Plié_, we could hardly hear the bass of stereo-quality sex below. At certain frequencies, however, our reflections quivered in the barre-bound wall of mirrors, turned watery and earthquake like people in time-travel films just before they teleport into the future or the past. All we knew of the postures and asymmetry blooming from the bodies below us we had gathered from a subversive babysitter and her VHS copy of _Showgirls:_ how the dancer’s skin became a pallet arching back from the pole, splashed with an irregular rainbow of stage lights. We started to see that movement everywhere—a young birch in the throws of a storm, the peel shedding the banana, a repentant clutching the pastor as he baptizes her back, deep under the dirty water. When I learned, years later, about Plato and art and how he believed everything was just a copy of a copy of perfection, and how it all just slides its way down heaven’s pole to our stationary perception, I had trouble bearing the memory of their weight, those women flipped upside-down on stage, suspended by their ankles, as we, just feet of insulation above them, mirrored the early allegory of their movements: _relevé, petit saut, perfect pointe._