

Poems excerpted from *Two Girls on a Raft* by Charlotte Gordon

Two Girls on a Raft

They are eighteen. They glitter
in bright nylon swimsuits. The sky
rushes down, wrapping them both
in blue air.

Years later, at the grocery store,
or in a line
at the gas station,
or when feeding
cereal to the new baby, or even
in the middle
of some last bit
of pain, the day
on the raft will shine
suddenly and the phantom souls will float
away like a boat and rise
to what -- emptiness, heaven, air?

Watchers

We meet at night in churches,
go up to the scale one by one,
waiting in the center aisle
between pews, anxious
to see what we have lost.
This is a kind of worship.
We are tied to the flesh,
its shrinking and expanding,
unconscious of any weight
that is not body--we don't
believe in souls or churches,
though every Thursday night
we are here, confessing,
feeling regret for our sins.

Even Gods

The Christian God
invents a woman to engender
Himself as Son, suggesting that
even gods crave human
incarnation as a kind of relief
to what the Greeks
describe as, frankly, lust.

An Abortion

I'm allowed to keep my socks on.
They've got purple and grey checks.
I chose them this morning, left behind
the grey woolens, the pink
tennis ones with the pompoms.
Those will still be stacked
next to my underwear when I get home.
I hold onto this thought like a ledge
when I open the door,
walk with the nurse past the closets,
the elevator doors, the recovery room,
a stack of green pails,
to the operating room.
When I wear these socks again,
I'll remember this walk, the last
few minutes that I was someone's
legs, food, eyes, incubator--the last
time I was not alone in my body.