

the room closes

Heather Taylor Johnson

1

in front of the doorway's a mirror, it's critical positioning, there are sliver-thin streaks and a smudge by my head, I'm drowning in a pain of glass, I think it's me but I'm morphing, middle-aged a hyphenated word, I can't tell if the mirror is sniggering or snivelling beneath its silence, my skin has stories too, it's lived a really long time, the mirror doesn't recognise time though I've tried to introduce them, time + mirror = I come from somewhere deep inside, it's full of blood and forever moving, memory's like a crooner floating above me and around me, I'm always looking at myself, a monster's come to visit, it's getting crowded in here, ripple and swell, my child-self's confused, in the mirror her hand is touching my cheek, she doesn't understand the point of this, I could explain but my flesh has forced me mute, like history, like the black creases and craters that made the world

2

in front of the doorway's a mirror, I am always looking at myself, I could explain but my flesh has forced me mute, ripple and swell, I think it's me but I'm morphing, it's getting crowded in here, it's critical positioning, there are sliver-thin streaks and a smudge by my head, my skin has stories too, it's lived a really long time, time + mirror = history, the black creases and craters that made the world, I am always looking at myself, I can't tell if the mirror is sniggering or snivelling beneath its silence, a monster's come to visit, middle-aged is a hyphenated word, the mirror doesn't recognise time though I keep trying to introduce them, memory's like a crooner floating above me and around me, I am always looking at myself, I'm full of blood and forever moving, I come from somewhere deep inside, I'm drowning in a pain of glass, my child-self's confused, she doesn't understand the point of this, in the mirror her hand is touching my cheek

3

in front of the doorway's a mirror, ripple and swell, I can't tell if the mirror is sniggering or snivelling beneath its silence, middle-aged is a ten-letter word, I could explain but my flesh has

forced me mute, like history, like the black creases and craters that made the world, it's getting crowded in here, there are sliver-thin streaks and a smudge by my head, my child-self's confused, in the mirror her hand is touching my cheek, she doesn't understand the point of this, of me drowning in a pane of glass, of me drowning in pain of glass, the mirror doesn't recognise time though I've tried to introduce them, memory's like a crooner floating above me and around me, it's critical positioning, a monster's come to visit, it's full of blood and forever moving, it's lived a really long time, I think it's me but I'm morphing, I come from somewhere deep inside, my skin has stories too, time + mirror = I am always looking at myself

Heather Taylor Johnson writes on Kaurna land, Adelaide. A novelist, poet, essayist and editor, her latest book is a fifth poetry collection called *Alternative Hollywood Ending*. She is an Adjunct Research Fellow at the University of Adelaide's JM Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice.