

## Unto Tarshish

But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

—Jonah 1:3

### I

Here, weeds wrap about my head.  
Acid razes my flesh smooth.  
I am out of sight—  
Far from the presence. . . .  
Yet I cannot tell the origins of this strife.  
Is it I that chiefly torments myself?

### II

Deep in some visceral place  
Where dwells the knowledge of my doom,  
I realize I shy from light and warmth  
As do the creeping things of life  
That dwell under stones and rotting logs.  
Encapsulated in this tight cell,  
I have become ambivalent to all light and sound.

### III

In observation of lying vanities,  
I am afraid to cry aloud.  
Three days and three nights  
Under mountains, with the bars of earth around,  
Have me questioning the mercy in a belch  
When Nineveh has much cattle.

—Laura Hamblin