

Ashley

For Ashley

For weeks we threw handfuls of names
into the air to quicken your arrival,
listening to their bounce;
disagreements confusing the air.
But the day we selected your name
you came alive, your curl-
framed face knew our house
long before we embraced.

And you, lilting to your babies,
know yourself by only one name.
But I wonder,
would you splash in cloudy rain puddles,
draw tangled spaghetti-thin hair, howl
like a moon-lonely wolf, stretch
like a black cat with dreams
of performing on stage if we
had named you, Jane?

Theresa E. Nelson