

Midnight Oil

how to speak of it
this thing that doesn't rhyme
or pulse in iambs or move in predictable ways
like lines
or sentences
how to find the syntax
of this thing
that rides the tides
and moves with the tides and under the tides
and through the tides
and has an underbelly so deep and wide
even our most powerful lights
cannot illuminate its full body
this is our soul shadow,
that darkness we cannot own
the form we cannot name
and I can only write about it at night
when my own shadow wakes me, when I can feel
night covering every pore and hair follicle, entering eyes
and ears, entering me like Zeus, a night I don't want
on me or in me, and I dream of giving birth
to a rusty blob of a child who slithers out of me,
out and out and won't stop slithering, growing and darkening,
spreading and pulsing between my legs
darkening into the world
what it might feel like to be a turtle, say,
swimming in the only waters you have ever known
swimming because it is the only way you move through the world
to come upon this black bile
a kind of cloying lover
a thing that looks to you
like a jellyfish, so you dive into it and try to eat it
but it covers your fins so they can't move as before
and there is a heaviness on your carapace and head
that wasn't there before, and you are blind
in the waters of your birth

Sheryl St Germain