

## the ambiguities of childhood

once there was a piece of wood | a special wood that spoke | *Little Puppet, wake!* |  
I am not good at understanding what is real | real children are not made of wood |  
real children have names | but | when not as wished for | then | named a different  
name | when you arrive | (meaning I) | you | (meaning I) | get a different name |  
spell disappointment | (meaning mine) | I am a real girl | a wooden puppet not to  
be afraid | a body when in harm's way | when most certainly | your face in the  
middle | (meaning mine) | of the swing | your perspective quickly left to right |  
(meaning mine) | also off the bench on which you | (meaning I) | am sitting | was  
sitting | maybe it was raining | maybe it was in the south of the south | where so  
many leaves greened the room | unsure of the offense | maybe the sun splaying  
on the floor | what is | what was | the sun spilling on the floor | (meaning me) |  
where is a person to go | where is she | (meaning I) | to go | anger the weight  
of small bones | I took up the work of the family | down into the mind's mines |  
where the water seeps | you know you think you might be drowning | (meaning I) |  
have taken up the work of you | (meaning me) | now I am | then I was | a river girl  
| mucking in the weeds | trawling for a reason | for the storms | what murks your  
surface | (meaning you) | I do not forgive | mud pulls | bottom | you my brackish  
life | a salty place where the sun falls in | I call that drowning | I am | I was | made  
of wood | a vessel | for the family to sail | what sea of doubts | but | does it float |