

HAVING JOINED YOU IN THE BATHROOM

Standing silent in front of the watchful toilet,
we look down into the broken bands of water
which, in their own way, reflect us. A naked mirror,
it winks, as the upset of flushing begins, at our embrace.
We cannot see all of ourselves, only rippled pieces
of faces above our bare bodies standing on the carpet.

With a bare toe I trace out patterns on the carpet.
I frown to hear the raucous celebration of the toilet
as it breaks our reflection into pieces
which swirl, disappearing through the water
as you hold tightly in a bathroom embrace.
Weeping, we glance into the mirror

as we have glanced into many mirrors.
Our familiar reflection is a cushion, a carpet
to support such heaviness of this concrete embrace.
Annoyed, I toss down the lid of the toilet
and listen to the final trickles of the water
and am sorry. I touch your face. Every piece,

every place, on your face, is a piece
I know, better than any mirror.
Your eyes shine, like this morning's sun, with water.
Under our feet, the snags on the carpet
rustle, as if in gossip, concerned, to the toilet.
They're gossiping of our embrace.

If, this last Sunday morning, an embrace
gives lovers grown apart some late peace
as we stand as witnesses before the toilet,

what of it? What? We murmur into the mirror
as we tiptoe, suddenly so careful, on the carpet.
Our voices seem to quiver like water.

And nothing restores like the coolness of water.
Unless it is to decide to leave all else aside, to embrace
for this moment, on the worn, weary carpet.
This is such a small piece
of your life, says the mirror.
It waits for assent from the toilet.

But water simply leaks onto the carpet
as the mirror in the toilet
reflects me, embracing you in pieces.

Betsy K. Ruppert