Self-Portrait

Analicia Sotelo

Do what you are going to do, and I will tell about it.

—Sharon Olds

He is twenty-six, humming to himself
in the studio. She is on her way to class,
touching her growing belly.

His plans to sculpt a baptismal dress
are set in place. There are: *Ironie infant*
ruffles set in a breathless,
greening copper.

She is in the grocery store, counting coupons.
Her palette is brighter, softer.

When I was twelve, there was an exhibition in New York
for rising artists. In my birthday phone call, my gift
was two questions: *How old are you?* and *Where*
did your mother store the cast?

In her bedroom, my mother sets silk on silk,
paints images of young girls balancing over cement
and water.

The mobile in my crib is a composite
of graphite and clay, turpentine and liquid glue.
The figures suspended in the air are naked, torn
at the torso, the wrist. From a desert Eden they rose,
far from innocent, so the world would see them
caught in mid-air and turning.