

To Love Oneself. To Cope.

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“I love myself.” The trembling words
fall from my lips in whispers only to drown
in the mist of my bathroom.

I’ve just taken a shower—
power-washed my pores, silkened
my skin with sugar scrub—

I’m clean. I trap the sweetness
of the sugar with rose scented lotions.
I rub them in, finding thorns on my legs

the razor missed. My smooth calves ruined
by small, coarse trees scratching my palm.
Damn. A night of self-care gone wrong.

How do I love myself if my legs aren’t soft?
If my face doesn’t glow? The mirror shakes
its head assuring me the hair isn’t noticeable.

Instead, it pulls my pupils to thighs that touch,
a stomach that hangs, paper hair, and a troll nose.
At least the lips look good in red, the mirror admits.

All are visible. The vapors of the mist suffocate
me. I can’t escape the sickening sweetness of roses.
I convince myself to go to bed. Maybe

I’ll look pretty in the morning. So I lay down,
reeking of “self-care;” the smell stings my eyes.
“I love myself,” I choke, knowing that I’m dirty.