

## KATHRYN MAYO

*Mary Hodo, 34, 2017*  
Wet Collodion ambrotype, 11 X 14 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

## ELLEN BASS

### Nicked

*for Beverly*

Thank you for coming when I was shut  
in my box of pain, four gold walls  
and the ceiling bearing down  
like atmospheric pressure. Thank you  
for the crystals to bring me sleep.  
You've always believed  
in everything I don't believe in.  
And thank you for the scarf swimming  
with blue dolphins from *The Garden of Earthly Delights*.  
We flew to Madrid because  
hadn't we always wanted  
to carry a fish on our heads?  
I like the silver twisted into your braid  
and the sweater that hugs your waist,  
grown another ring each year.  
But I still see the palimpsest  
of the girl I fell in love with  
in a yellow minidress that barely  
covered her bare ass.  
Half a century later, I lay inert,  
my spine like a snake nicked  
by the shovel's blade. Thank you  
for painting all the doors in my house  
a greenish blue, "Sigh of Relief,"  
covering those ugly, scarred hollow-core doors  
with a syrup of spring. And, darling,  
thank you for driving me to the store.  
I wore the same soft pants and gray sweatshirt  
I'd been wearing for months,  
my hair matted like a baby with crib head.  
As I perused the cashmere and cotton,  
I was newly aware of my arm reaching out  
and my hand sliding hangers along the silver bar,  
the glide and then the crisp clink  
as one struck another.  
And when the pain ramped up,  
you drove me home. Reclined in the car,  
I watched the roofs of houses flash by,  
and telephone wires, and treetops and clouds.

Ellen Bass's most recent book is *Like a Beggar* (Copper Canyon Press, 2014). Her poems appear frequently in the *New Yorker* and the *American Poetry Review*. A chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, she teaches in the MFA program at Pacific University.