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Birth Control for the Earthmother Rampant upon a Fruitful World

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No matter how many times, it is never easy.
She labors over her paintings.
Playfully she calls one of them “Contraction.”
She hides her work from male professors
who are aware that art is, after all, female.
It’s a secret she knows in her bones, brain, ovaries.

So she hides this under many masks.
The mask series startle visitors to the gallery.
Artists buy them, she says.

Underneath the funky clothes she wears,
her breasts float over a white horizon.
She feels her work rising to the top like cream.
With a broad brush she washes layer after layer
of paint that could be primordial ooze.
She lets it happen. The colors flow: sienna, ultra-
marine, a glow of vermilion.

Just after Eden she would have squatted
year after year on strong haunches
pushing out babies.
Now she takes the pill.
One child is enough... more than enough.
Each month one or two eggs nest, sigh, die.
In her counterpart, millions of sperm spinout each day.
Attuned to fecundity, earth, sea and stars, she paints and the paintings disperse into the world. Let the dream begin, say, with a spill of pearly seeds from the lush centers of melons or squashes or swirls of eggs in a teeming sea. She holds the mystery. The earthmother passes her left hand over her belly then spatters a loaded brush over the white paper. The random colors run.

“This is the fun part,” she laughs. It is the conception. Later she will labor to bring it to completion. She pauses to think, brushing her hair away from her brow. “This is as difficult as giving birth,” she comments. Then she continues her painting.