Bourne toWrite...
creative writing workshops

Echidna

by Lauren Barri Holstein

The blackbird and the robin watch me
through the window, all blackness and flame-hearted
Blinking questions

Where will you go, Mother?

I climb a blazing mountain to meet the deathless
flames, the lion-headed
in the belly of the rock
my belly swelled and I pray

My sister is finally pregnant

And I am purging over a bonfire

I can't sleep in your old t-shirts anymore
Cotton-kindling alight

Athena's owls answer in incantation,
home
(and I know from her song that she was never on the hero's side)

I descend with a red-breast
falling headfirst into the sea
and embers fly out from my skin in luminescent green
I am an ever-amorphous reflection of the night's constellations

I fly home in dizzying spirals
So afraid of facing the empty house

I stand outside the window, watching myself move on the inside
crouched in the kitchen
roaring chimaera
birthing a blood-soaked oblivion

Shall I light the whole place with my breath?

Mother of Monsters,
lead me to the water
to the sticky green pond of my land
to the home of your other daughters
to the countless hydras and their regenerating hunger
where I know myself to be mother and child
mortal and ageless molecule
warmonger and defender of the phosphorescence

All my children
serpent-tailed and multi-headed
long caged in my bloods