

# Homemaker

Call me  
obligate symbiont,  
call me monstrous mate,  
creator of gall, baiting my own jail,  
with no chance of bail –  
call me what you like; your words  
don't reach across the threshold  
of this home that you would call a cage  
into which I've slipped to sit  
enshrined, manipulating waves, mistress  
of the slowly closing coral fist  
whose finger bones curl inward at my will,  
fusing to a neatly twisted nest  
that lets in what I need and nothing else –  
my food delivered by obliging tides,  
my consorts diving in through tiny holes  
to set me up to brood and raise  
whole tribes of water spiders;  
my sons to take their chances  
in the open sea,  
my titanic daughters  
to take after me.

*The female coral gall crab, three times bigger than the male, influences the growth of bird's nest coral to form a cage that permanently encloses her.*

Janet Lees

OPPOSITE: Gjert Rognli, 'Genesis – The beginning', from  
What nature knows - Dan maid luondu diehtá.