

Melissa Atkinson Mercer

## Please say something different

If it happened: the wilderness of memory, the knife, the baptismal  
fossil. If my mother

escaped the midnight war, the milk moon of her pale and bloody feet.

If everyone was so lucky.

If I'm a star carved from a fish's lung, from the core of a fallen apple.

If I prove myself real. Darling, if I cannot

begin this fight again.