

## With Wings

As a teenager, I hated  
when maxi-pad commercials  
flooded the TV screen, especially  
when my older brother sat  
beside me on the golden rod  
corduroy couch, witnessing  
my reaction to the winged  
white pads soaked with blue,  
gelatinous fluid, never red, never  
admitting the real animal stink and gore.  
I didn't want to admit my body  
bled and ached, pretended  
to be sterile as the lapis-soaked  
gauze on screen, nothing  
hot and bloody, nothing cramping  
and doubling me over, gritting my teeth.  
There was nothing as embarrassing  
as being a girl, sore and leaking  
dark knots of burgundy,  
a weakling to be abandoned  
by their herd.