

Thetis at the River

Sophia Menconi

A child begotten of war, golden apple
already sliced and falling to bits at his mother's feet.
And so mother takes her son to the river. She holds him underwater
and she tries to keep him under
water. She wants to save him,
but no one can remember the danger. She tries to sear
immunity into his skin, but she cannot
save all of him, so she raises him

out of the water, clutching his ankle
between her thumb and finger; she lifts him out of the water, and he is not
drowned. She holds him against the harsh light
and says *I have done my best.* Thinking *I should have done more.*

She sends him out in to the daylight, in to the sea-salt air, in to the battle.
And then he dies.

There are parts in between, but they don't matter.
Mother takes her child to the river and she doesn't
drown him. She doesn't save him, either.