

An Orange

thumb slipped into darkness
you lift away fragrant layers

your hands shimmer like some
ancient god
oiled with revelation

it falls open to you
the way I fall open to you

Artemis Mows the Lawn

Pull pull pull. Three clumsy masculine strokes,
shudder and resultant roar. Only a man would invent
a machine that needs a hand job before it works.

The neighbors have resigned themselves
to the tableau: weed-wild on head and mound,
moon flesh blurred and unhemmed
and vibrating like a tuning fork. I may
have to mow my lawn (city ordinances,
you know) but you'll never catch me
wearing clothes. White and smudged
around the edges, smooshed into civilization,
I chew the grass in decibel circles
around the rosebushes the damn deer
won't leave alone. Unpruned, thorny and straggled,
they are wild like me and just as bare.

Silver Infinities

In that other life, I teach piano;
you sell antiques: little moon-leafed
boxes and cobalt
blown-glass fishing floats
and musty brown medicine bottles
with remnants of sticky remedies.

You whistle home wet with fern bouquets,
shoo rain beneath your boots.
I shake Chopin from my fingers
while you strum out the stars,
fry potatoes for dinner.
Moths loop silver infinities around the lamp.

You like my hair short
so you can kiss my neck.

We rise before the sun. Strawberries steep
in pockets, our hands
free for each other. We unfold
our red blanket
over brash spears of spring grass.

Clouds eat across the sky in caterpillar bites
while we discuss other lives we might have led.

Maybe you'd have a yellow cottage,
sweaters sprinkled with wood shavings,
a son with Victorian picture-book cheeks.

Maybe I'd have a daughter
who prefers her shoes on the wrong feet,
and another who draws only horses,
maybe a husband
who loves me in his own quiet way.

Maybe, happy as we'd be,
I'd sometimes drown
the what-ifs with too much wine.

Maybe you'd lie awake once
in a while
listening
to the scabbering absences.

To a Cellar Spider

Splayed and pale
x-ray of a star. You're the living
thing inside it that beats
across the sky. Radiant on your web,
your scratched and milky gnat-spattered
nebula. Fragile arachnid,
apex knees pupil-dark
and just as seeing. They blink
as each chevron leg stretches
along the wall; they watch
the universe bend around them.
Carry your convections along
the glass spectrum of your exoskeleton.
Luminous giant crawling
across the void—
do you know
you make me question everything?