

BROTHER/EVANGELIST

He crouches over the fire in a primordial position. You watch from the throne of your beach chair as he tenderly places each twig into the pit, lest he wake them from their natural slumber. It is as if Prometheus just delivered his gift, so deliciously sweet are those sapphire flames. Today he introduced you to the hasselback potato—a goyish food, your mother says. Why does he want to abandon us? Behind the shallow wall of trees, Titania clutches her stolen child. Golden wine slices your voice from your throat, and then you are sleeping and not even here.

OPHELIA IN WATER

Kill her! Then bring her back to life. Ophelia, I bestow upon you the power of breathing. You only see what you believe in. Even. In a pond, amongst weeds and wisteria, you left us, sinking into warm ink or the original womb of the earth or something lovely like that, and perhaps it is good that you left, but I want you back, even if for moments you tasted what it was like to be free, free from all this, from the men, from the hasty requirements of being what you had to be, I do not know what I want, your life or your freedom, and if death means freedom then what is the point of us even trying. I want you only for a moment, reanimated, your tempered voice, do not temper yourself. When you tell me what to do, I will listen.

DEATH

Has hallways made of lead and summer grass. In winter, springtime, birds sing with us. All the girls hold hands like fairies and say honey, honey, he was not for you. I remember the saints, made of marble, whispered lullabies, Russian flowers growing under the feet of crushing weight, supreme leaders who never heard, said, smaller, smaller. That was then, past times I have forgotten, the taste of ashen blooms, rusting to salt in my mouth. This is the flavor, at the edge of the world, the hallway into nothingness, the neglect of your absent god. Who I love, and hold in my hands, just as I hold your face.

ISLAND OF OPPORTUNITY

I am a dirty girl. That is what they say, and so they wash us with linens, coarse cloth and buttonhooks. Not meant for little girls who come from Russia (or meant only for us). Little sister Mary has big black eyes, she is a wooden doll, and so the nurses adore her, bring her bread and other gifts. Mary, Mary, what dost thou want, they ask like supplicants at the altar of something poorly misunderstood. Too bad she's a Jew, otherwise they would give her all their blood and children too. After all we've been through, the wasteland, the cold hands, the showers, they should give us everything.