

## Jersey

- I. A girl storms out of her body to sing you the highway: your skin is calligraphy and ink. Back turned, soap and seawater leather her palms.
- II. The tide batters your knees: blood-puckers of coast, blue bruises dusted over telescope skin. Nothing was ever more worth it.
- III. Your words are gloved in oyster silk, the low bass tones of twilight. You probably wouldn't know me now. I bite my tongue, my teeth taste like cough-syrup.
- IV. I was thinking of silver needles, tire-tracks in a sliver of moonlight. Route 13, the wooden house by the hospital, white bridge and *fuck you*, carved in the rail.
- V. The sharp bones of oak trees keep you safe somewhere in Jersey. The aria lifts: your eyes, blackened sea pearls, whisper, *don't you lie to me*.
- VI. Up north, a blue wind lifts the hair from your shoulders. You will wade through your bogs, fill your terrariums, slowly become fluent in the flutter of seabird wings.

## The Yellow Marrow

I could have loved the wolf. Alone he was a fist of night sky,  
body of starlings, hydrogen, helium. I held a flashlight

to his chest, traced the glowing web of his arteries to prove that something moved  
within him. He buried small things in in the storm gulch: elk's teeth, brass keys, warped

violin strings. Sharp teeth dug craters into my throat. *Now I've made you the moon.* I could have  
loved the wolf, but I wanted to be hunter. Wanted teeth, blood, bone. I wanted the yellow  
marrow.

## Inglewood

*I wish to cry. Yet, I laugh,  
and my lipstick leaves a red stain like a bloody  
crescent moon on the top of the beer can.  
-Sylvia Plath*

My skin is a sheet of Braille: moon-hungry,  
shiver by the widening current, curling

into pale shins, bewitching me further  
into its darkening plane. The moon, hanging

like a ball over the western seaboard,  
annihilating, with every glance. I am

the girl who does not dance: your eyes  
catch the light, your teeth

catch my hair. Night  
is temporary insanity: barefoot girls

with tambourines, purple lights  
in Santa Monica.

## For Aaron, Disenchanted

Something once soft hums in you  
while you sleep. I watch it lift

through you as you thrash,  
flail. The bright tangerine

of your heart comes apart  
in slices. I find them hidden

in your pillowcase. Mama's eyes  
are the color of your absence

now. A little more grey  
than gunpowder. You

never pressed your ear to my lung. Never  
tangled my synapses into sailing knots. Never

folded my body like an origami swan, passed  
your secrets up through my throat. You are not mine

but you always were. The forgetting-boy

lives in a hollow of atlases. The birds  
knew his name before I did. Knew the geometry

of our loneliness, our rabbit-hole  
in the evergreens. Our blue jazz at midnight.

Something ached between us, but there was nothing  
to hold but our compasses, the unlocked gun-cabinet

in the cellar, the yellowed globe  
in the bedroom, spinning darkly.