

Crucifixion

and other poems

crucifixion

Do you think Mary
prayed to her own son?

Do you think my mother
prayed to the same son
when men
flawed with sin
crucified my sleeping
vulnerable
body

I bite my tongue so hard
blood floods my mouth
 back to Noah
the lord loves repetition

Do you think the men
who hammered me
into my cross
pray
for forgiveness

Do they beg for understanding
for penance redemption

Nails pulled out of wrists
lie just as straight
 and narrow
as ones that have never pierced skin

Do you think that I
sacrificial lamb of sinful man

Will be able to grieve myself?

when nina loved billie

Finger

tips

dance over cheekbone

entangled legs

like ivy on storied buildings

noses touch, intimate knowledge

passed on from skin to skin

When you whisper my name

i ask god

to preserve the feeling

of syrupy honey

dripping from your lips

Mouth against jaw

low and slow

miles davis envious

of something

so

sweet

Make it last forever darling.

bloodletting

When you tip the bottle
and sweet wine hits the back of your throat
you choke on promised ecstasy

Cloying alcohol frothing
out the corners of your mouth
fingers shoved down esophagus
so you can pull out
the holiness in a lie

Sometimes mama says *I love you*
sometimes mama says *go fuck yourself*
sometimes mama apologizes
sometimes mama doesn't

It all sounds the same
same sureness of bitter communion
the body of Christ
the spite of Beelzebub
that same sweet wine
poured into your mouth

When my daddy told me
he couldn't stand a faker
I drank a gallon of the damn wine
until crying just made me drunker
until I sloshed
when
 I stumbled
until I vomited cotton candy pink
all over the bathroom floor

Goddammit kid, learn how to hold your liquor!

I hold liquor
like Mary held Jesus
pulled off the cross

wracked with guilt
blood on her thin hands
they don't tell you this
but I bet she wailed
I bet in that moment
she asked to die too

In other words
I don't drink anymore.

sunday mass

There is a twin size bed
with our impressions in it
thin narrow
twisted around me
like twine on newspaper wrapping

The ice on your driveway
is welcome to bring me to my knees
genuflecting at your feet
shattered caps feel like mercy
you catch me before I hit the ground

I love the way your mouth
hooks on the divet in my neck
soft murmur of *hallowed be thy name*
my name
 is just
 a word
until it slips between your lips

When your palms press against my body
Gliding upwards with reverence
I wonder what you pray for
if you are giving thanks
Or asking for forgiveness

I am
shattered moon
broken promise
fallow land
unheard prayer

You love me anyways.

birdspeak

Crow's feet
claw my throat
at any attempt
to move forward

Grandmother's words sting
Do you tell people you're suicidal for attention?
this time it's woodpecker beaks
holes drilled into larynx
voice whisked away
like sunflower seeds
in the dead of winter

When I cannot move my lips
I hum a chickadee song
same song from age 17
burning clothes in the woods
Chick-a-dee-dee-dee
birds sing back
Chick-a-dee-dee
if I listen hard enough
it sounds like prayer

Mother's words carve into chest
You can kill yourself if you pay for the funeral
this time it's vulture bills
picked apart heart
exposed rib
I spoil in the sun
they continue to feast

I ask the bluebird
if flying feels like falling
Tu-a-wee
I wait for response
she looks at me
Tu-a-wee
if I listen hard enough

it sounds like

This is not your fault.