

## Sounding Stair

My brother and I stand aside

Against her corridor guise

One on either side

Anchors the stretcher

Crumpled pyre

Cradled cot

I imagine her stiff and slipping mound

Obscure under her shroud

Rolling trundle bows and bounds down

Pummels stair after sounding stair

## Open-heart

He tears open the entrance  
Strikes the center and spreads sternum wide  
Illuminates the glistening smooth surface

Cloth-mounted trunk exposes  
Valves vessels atrium ventricles  
Leaflets rooted and christened in blood

His steady hand pulls steel and stitches  
Stretched bands descending into  
Patched exactness

Shocked into rhythm  
He joins bones and  
Fastens the skin husk shut

# Arc

I stood at every angle to make this moment real

Remembered her hands are my hands

Studied her stopped heart open arced peel

I stood at every angle to make this moment real

Fingered a scar I gave her that never wholly healed

Stroked and brushed her brow of sinewy strands

I stood at every angle to make this moment real

Remembered her hands are my hands

## Bow

You extract the history and keep our family secret  
You evade and blame like she has the control  
You cut out the part that shaped us and sealed it  
You shirk your own blood and shut your eyes  
You couldn't understand  
You wouldn't understand the illness  
You loosened the binding  
You liberated to live in sickness  
You bow to it you bow to it  
You look your son in his eyes now and say it  
That you were willing to let her die without  
You say it  
That you were willing to let her die without words  
You say it without words  
You are absolved  
You are absolved now  
You are absolved

# Adder

She stared out into hot summer air,  
Her patch of earth launched an arsenal,  
Emerged from embers she struck  
High from her iron church.  
The act pulled back,  
Bare,  
I felt your sheets.  
In her shadow,  
The edge of hands,  
Held me,  
Hated me.