

April

The white top reanimates, little stranglers
haloed with petals. I thought I killed

them all last year with poison, with my bare
hands dragging them out of the graves

they were digging in the lawn. Weeds
always return. You never

will. The neighbors started gardens but I've been
wary, haven't even tilled the weedy soil. Dandelions

roar neon wounds. Wind riots
in the budding plum, the frantic

blossoms your absence. Sky an ache
of angles through awkward branches. The poppies

under fatten and stir.
Bent, I spray white top and crabgrass; crush

cheat; I resist. You insist
the sky's schizophrenic with clouds. The sky

pales the way a face
drains. The wind's scouring tears

eyes (a reflex) that reflect only the ordinary
light. Mid-April, and frost expected after midnight.

Corvette

As if Cancer was a giant
vampire that broke off the blackened
fang it sucked the blood
from my family with & left
it in the flesh to fester.

The white
skeleton stretched grey
skin into a yellowed
grin, waved its claw
like a magician
performing a trick.

Stripes
our Brindle/Pit mix
whined and sniffed a chrome
wheel, lifted leg to piss
but found Dad's foot & curse
up his ass instead.

My brother
hooted & drooled, lusted
over the two-seater trap.
Never good at math, Dad:
We were four, not counting
the dog.

Splinter, I thought. *Stab*. Then:
Dick.

Told my brother he could pull it out
of the garage. Turned to me
O meat of him, grey-tinged pink with rotting, said:
You get to wash it.

Midnighting

I like to do it while I'm drunk.
I like to do it when I'm starved.

Slick out under a fat
moon dressed in black,
even the shoes.

Some nights call
for hooves to clatter
through quelled neighborhoods
(The sleeping finch
while dreaming),

others stripped
naked as a wish
to be helpless, to be
holy.

Others, lonely.

Or, fashion paws
from cat hair and nail parings
to match the mask
filched from the raccoon
hunkered under
the shed—paws

ideal
for scrambling
up streetlights—now
varmint stupid
for starlight—pale

as a secret
no one burns to know,
breath molecular
chaos I marry
to wind and go.

17th

August you give me a canker
my periodontalist wants to biopsy
you send me flailing into rush hour
you ding my fender
you unfriend me
you terrorize my mother out of language
you berate her with dialysis
you castigate her with leukemia
you accuse us with fires
you plaque the valley in smoke
you cast deformed shadows
you bully us into prayer
Are you prone to canker sores
You have a history
of smoking (sinning)
Do you suck hard candy
Do you suck anything
What about cinnamon
what about turmeric coriander why
is curry so expensive
what about lemons
what about *getting darker instead of dusk*
What about Egypt Iraq Iran Syria
Our lust
for quinoa
disempowers Bolivians
On the Internet
I saw a man eat another man's heart
I saw a man immolate himself
You unveil the olinguito
then beach hundreds of dolphins
Thunder after midnight explodes
me from dream
shudders the windows
catapults the cats
casts serpents seething
through the barren plum tree
the shriveled raspberry
a respite
August
your hard hot rain
on my wet hapless face

January

I defy you this year with a smile
less one tooth
extracted because the bone
that anchored it
dissolved. Neglect born
of neglect. A mother loves one
son but not the other. A goose will kill
its smallest, lamest mouth
for the sake of other hungers.
We endure
inversion-gummed air, The Gap
and I, ignore
side streets rutted with snow
marbled like foam on a latte.
More than halfway through
my forties I know
better, January. If the boss I'd fire
your ice; shove your single digits up your
aurora borealis. I heart you
like a clogged artery, stroke you
like a pulse burst. You've struck the sky
of birds, strung the smog
with tinsel. The frost-fringed dead
limbs of the trees fool the kids
but I'm lost
as the starlings. Such garish
garnish crowns you the grandest, damndest
widow. You suck
me dry. My hands crack
and flake. My lips need
a balm. A stranger reached
into me and wrenched
out a tooth. He numbed me
first—I felt nothing—but the cracking
was like ice fallen through.
I've fallen through you,
January. Your frozen fist will wreck a face.
I turn my cheek for you to kiss.