

GESTATION

In this handful of green months, I am glad.
The crocus cranes its neck from the soil,
empurpling the earth, making it perse.

The charm hums its hollow song from the
sweet smelling arms of the alder, and the bl

os

so

ms

fall as I do — to my knees.

Still, still.

The terrible pear (buxom and bay) reminds me.

I reach for the dawn-blue berries,
as though they were raspberry leaf, rose
moss, cohosh. Their skin, fog and chalk,
but firm in my faltering palm.

I swallow them greedily, forcing the fog
through my teeth, praying for awful release.

SO AS TO SAY

A husband buries his wife in this story,
 buries her beneath the bitter
 dawn-blue.

But he weeps, so as to say
pity, so as to say
sorry,

 so as to say, his son of blood
 and snow

will have no
milk to sup.

GUILLOTINE

Marleen ravel into the kitchen, her throat
 caught like crawfish,
muttering something about
white silk, how still he was.

 I steady my wrist to boil the turnips,
to bury the nerves, and tell
her to give him one in the ear
 if he does not answer.

Marleen —
star of the sea, my high tower,
 he will not answer.

I am sorry for making you the
guillotine, Marleen.

SILVER & CINNAMON

Knelt under the table,
wiping away her tears
of blood, she collects
the thrown-away
bones,

her belly curdling at the
teeth-marks in his tibia,
the pits and divots in his
pelvis.

Gathered in the
silk kerchief, they rattle
and clack at her side,
sounding out an elegy
for the once
clung flesh.

On the clotted soil,
beneath the burial tree,
she keeps her eyes shut
tight.

The boughs begin
to stir, they part coolly
and caress again —
arboreal applause.

A kind of mist rises,
lucent and rare, and in
the mist, a violet fire.
From the fire,
a phoenix.

With song like pale silver
and cinnamon, seizing
a quiet gale, catching
the curdle in the girl's
stomach and
shushing it.

TESTIMONY

I have an aria out
of the brume, bright
and composed
for barter.

On the goldsmith's
red roof, my unfamiliar
feathers spread
and warbling.

It was my mother
who butchered me,
it was my father
who ate me,
my sister, little Marleen,
found all my little bones,
bound them in a
silken cloth,
and laid them under
the juniper tree.
Peewit, peewit,
what a beautiful
bird am I.

He compliments my
melody, but I will not
sing a second time
for free.

I take the gold chain
in my right claw.

My ballad, now a
blade I have whet one
thousand times, edging
out my throat.

On the cobbler's
tin shingles, my black
eyes like pitch,
brimming.

It was my mother
who butchered me,
it was my father

who ate me,
my sister, little Marleen,
found all my little bones,
bound them in a
silken cloth,
and laid them under
the juniper tree.
Peewit, peewit,
what a beautiful
bird am I.

He compliments my
melody, but I will not
sing a second time
for free.

I take the red shoes
in my left claw.