

## St. John the Baptist Bearing Witness

The dog enters with a slaughtered rabbit in his mouth like a twisted pietà. At high noon every clock in the house sucks its teeth. I wanted to be shown something transcendent, so I take what I am given—the dog's bloody offering at my feet. My mood disorder is impervious to metaphor. Slips away from simile. It isn't like or as, isn't is. The manic mystic is a myth. Still, I am before you today to extend the invitation—synapse rupture, syntax snap. Won't you come? I cannot say what god is waiting, only that when they call me, I come barreling. Only that the weight of wandering has led me back from the wilderness to bear witness to what I have seen—the rabbit: limp ligament of gore and glory, glinting sun-electric—only that when they call me, I come.

## Outside

Yes, I lost the lottery. I can never write about the moon again, only the neon ball locked between the dog's fangs, only what it's like to see without glasses. I buy expensive oils which come in dark bottles labeled *Sleep*. I buy expensive oils which come doorstep so I need not leave. The eggplant talks to me. The dog talks to me but I don't know Basque. The weeks wind so tight. Drowning was long ago but it's come up again, vomiting lake onto the butcher block in the kitchen. Depression commercial crudités. This lottery is not a game. One cannot describe the taste of fennel as it is unlike anything else. Hold, I have just been informed of black liquorice. Outside the poem the phone is ringing. Pick it up.

## Still Life

Outside, I might have had teeth. I might have been an antelope or the lion which devours it. I might have been an infant, latching. Inside I am a creature in a silk blouse: cockscomb mane on edge, gaping my empty mouth like a bloody, hollowed pomegranate. I wake beclouded by bloodlust—anachronism antedomestic. So often I wake clutching my arms. Inside is wicked, elastic—everything a trick of the intellect, of the iris. When I can grin and bear it, I behold my own grotesque face in the mirror. *Are you there?* The antelope bids.

## Commodity Fetish

They put me under  
the wire and danger  
comes like water  
from a comet. I am  
sprinting at the top  
of my lungs. Soon  
my teeth will be sold  
in an online shop  
called Whatsoever  
ThingsAreLovely—  
nestled inside  
the velvet mouth  
of a faux Fabergé egg.

I checked YES at intake.  
I answered the questions  
earnestly. I wrote, “It is  
not natural to hold anything  
at the neck.” Even a shot  
spruce grouse writhing  
in the dirt.

The interviewer asks  
how it feels to know  
I will soon die  
of consumption.

I am sprinting  
for my life.