

A Dead Mother Speaks

I once carried two,
son and daughter. My twins
held hands, touched nose
to nose, smelling their breath.

He left first, screamed
into another room, another life:
heat rising from impatience,
sweat not seasoning appetite,
the camouflage and smoke.

I know what's out there:
cakes with berries, cracked perfume bottles,
porridge, albino gorilla, glowing coals.

I hear the ground—
machines, men,
war or farming.

What Happens to Sight

A flash of lightning—
the charred air I suck in
clouds the stem of my brain.
Day is night is
so long.

Everything turns yellow—
sea, skin, the white of a pig's eye.

Not Salt

Cut the fingernails and toenails of the dead
over a white handkerchief
used to wipe a baby's spittle.

Gather those arches in your mouth
chew slowly
for their talc is softer than salt or smoke.

Swallow them all
so the dead remain
inside you—
marked on your clavicle.

When you die, they will find you.
You will tell them *I held you*
waving away a fog.

The Grass Will Not Miss Us

It does not say so
insists on living, always

coming back.
We are mostly water.

The grass drinks
what we lose:
piss that ends
a dream, blood fleeing
its bullet, the sweat of an orphan.

It cannot say no
growing to cut us.

Blue's in grass. Its yellow
separates itself from us.

We walk on the hills
stare at the crowns of green
branch and cloud.
Our hearts flat, heavy as stone.