

## Avowal

I could never go back  
to that madness of mold, that shell  
of false motherhood, that

pestilential hold of his hand.  
How like a fossilized bird he held me  
in stone. Why bother

lacing wire through my lips  
when he wanted his tongue within them? Always  
that dogged dominance. Pan to—

the dangle of the dandelion's neck.  
The pursuit of Daphne  
is written by the opposite sex as— love.

A hazard in a branch of mazzard.  
Did you know most houseplants are toxic,  
they consume toxins

from the air like housewives.  
The crucifixion cross was crafted from dogwood  
and here ours are in their shameless bloom.

What does it mean to wear a crown  
of thorns? We grew together like shrubs on brick  
the core of our fruit poisonous,

the flesh, with its promise of rot.  
You were no Apollo,  
no matter your mad persistence.

Now I sketch laurel trees in the margins.  
I've forgotten how to give, I gave enough.  
This pit of years, my vassal state.

That abomination in nature,  
that creature with a stick, crouching  
over my vessel, my feudatory hips.

Elbow into shoulder blade  
a wasp flicking against the lobe of my ear.  
Slip, slip, slip, we fell as

doves sucked out of the sky

into the masticating mouth of the bull,  
who spit out the feathers.

Watch me as I thread them  
through the holes in my ears,  
a reminder of the wreckage.

Such a felony this love.  
That small perjury of vows, rankle  
festering in my mouth,

amongst the wild divinity of vowels.