

## PRAYER FOR MY PARTNER'S LOVER

Your name is lovely,  
stark and brightly hued, soft  
nape to harsh click, in the span of two syllables.

In my mouth you are a collection of sounds.  
In his mouth you are a new home. At night,

he carefully spits out rubies while he believes I am asleep.  
He shines them for you while he does his laundry.  
He keeps one long string in his pocket,

so he can necklace you  
when the time is right. I am thousands of feet  
above streets and houses, as I write your name.

I am in the patch of sky traceable by Oregon.  
Did you know that's where I'm from?

The sharp of those evergreen trees  
and the edges of seasons, round, that you eat  
like new fruit: these are the natural angles

of my bones, the curve of my fat hip.  
Did you know my father near-left my  
mother, the year before I grew breasts?

He was still wearing an overcoat, the morning he told us.  
The heat of my sleep against the cold of his coat.

The new woman had a name like yours.  
I never wanted him to kiss me again.

I saw your face and body on a poster once,  
tattooed and dewy. I took the poster down,  
brought it to him, watched the flush begin

at the base of his neck. As I write this, I am  
thousands of feet above the electrical poles.

I imagine the corners of every city are papered  
with your name. I am praying hard for  
the merciful shake of a windstorm.

## AFTER KNEELING

Get up off your knees. Sit down at the table.  
Baby girl, it's been too long since you've  
had something good to eat. Let Mama  
cook you something warm. Let Daddy  
rock you. Baby girl. You deserve  
a full plate.

Get up off your knees. Sit down at the table.  
This is your home now. This is your home,  
and these are your bones.  
They deserve to be draped in curves,  
deserve to be upright. You need  
shelter. Let me shelter you.

Get up off your knees. Sit down at the table.  
It's time to look me in the eye.  
Those eyes should not be wasted on dirty tile.  
Look at me.  
Look at me.

Get up off your knees. Sit down at the table.  
The big boys are playing. You can do this, too.  
Pull out your swollen                      words.  
Your large                                      ideas.  
Slap them down, make them pay.  
You deserve to win this round.

Get up off your knees.  
No more gulping down his pleasure.  
No more hiding your smile.  
No more cleaning his floor with your grief.  
No more secrets. No more  
secrets. Baby girl. Come sit next to me.  
Come sit down at the table.  
It's dinnertime.

## HEIRLOOM

There is a loose strand of inheritance  
called appetite. I have pulled it slow

from the hem of my mother's skirt.  
She is unraveled, but see —

it was not hers to begin with.  
Let us pray.

Our Fathers, who emptied the shelves  
so we could not get fat,

hollow be thy names. See  
how I am still eating.

I have smashed down every quiet bit  
of plate and glass from the cupboard.