

A
AT
THE
LEPIDOPTERIST'S
HOUSE



Female Collector

Story hoarder, keeper of notes folded
in Latin class, stubs of dulled drawing pencils,



The vision locks on a self-portrait drawn in pencil,
your own eyes bodiless, black-centered pearls



Corvid

Grudge-keeper, harbinger
of the bad, black darter
in new grass, dull-billed and raucous
worrier, hoarse talker and tempter
of dogs and fed-up farmers,
beak and talon of rain-logged worms—
your caw nags at the edges
of sleep. You, who live a double life
and bark at the



Self-Portrait as Eris

I no longer comb my hair.
My tempers swirl in all directions.

Once meek, once carefully groomed
and caught in the gnarled grip

of manners, I have let fall



Krugerrands

For Betsy

Buried just behind the granite post
that marks the outline of my garden, the gold
grows colder. Its presence is my family's lore,
and like most myths, it seems fantastic, old;
some muggy August days it is a sore
that festers in the earth, or else it is a ghost
entombed below my heart—hepatic, dark.

All that the gate of love let in I've tried
to stone out—restoring toppled walls that littered
my pastures with feldspar and quartz—lost
fortunes. Blinded by bullion glitter,
we were naïve to what our secret cost,
and let the myrtle grow. Its rich leaves lied.
I can still see the heaving shovel's mark.



A Letter that Never Reached Montreux

I never visited your grave, though I've got my canceled ticket from last August, a ferry chart, pictures of fields I imagined brimming with Queen Anne's lace, the late knelling of crickets.

I don't know what it is to never go home, though, years ago, I looked up at the arched ceilings your father owned, rows of glass cases busy with specimens, once-treasured nets—I took

so many photos. I remember plummeting down to the deep stations of the metro—gold carved columns and blue marble walls—like buried treasure hoards or death chambers. In the little town

where I was born, my father rests under a white pine, and he died like that, gazing up between evergreens at a February sky. The winter is mine.

Summer never granted me the light I needed, though I watched herons, ravens and hawks, butterflies whose names weigh down their lightness.

Those months, I found a kindness in the sun, a blessing in its constancy. But in this season, it's the moon that waxes, pearl-like, a naked woman dressed

in her own luminosity. I wore a pair of wings last Halloween—lifting and black at my back. I've seen your drawings and the air

sharpened by monarchs each September; I found a luna moth sunning herself on hot pavement in the month when my blood thrummed, when I never heard the roaring sound

of jet engines, the pop of my ears as we rose steeply to elevations no live body could survive. I want to tell you that I have loved deeply



in this world, that I have known the true weight of a heart
in a plummeting body, that I have learned how to scream
myself calm on the interstate, windows cracked, my throat nally starting

to open. I want to gift you that song, of dried grasses
windblown at roadsides, of lost ight patterns and homes
reconceived as this bright dream hurtles past us.

