

## **Cold: Biting**

the truth,  
much like snow, melts in the palm  
of my frostbitten hands. for instance, i've convinced  
myself that violence is what will make  
me stop loving the man i want.  
yet here i am holding his secrets—curled fists, angry teeth, crowbar imprint— in all my  
unmentionables.

behind my eyes  
is a set of wind chimes  
comprised of the nails and grunts/ he fastened me to the grass with. i can still  
feel the tremble,  
to this day,  
wonder which one of us was overtaken by  
the vigilant chill first. this would help  
establish who was hunter and who was haint.

every relentless winter  
the blustery cold  
finds me in all the warmest corners  
of my house  
the space between my ears  
a choir of tempestuous ghosts  
who were never dead  
Is it too much to ask  
to be forgiven of sins I wanted to commit  
but can still say I was dragged into?

i remember a barking dog/ being my salvation: his indication that a bloody  
excursion between my labyrinth of  
accidental wet and reluctant soft  
must see light at a later date.  
i laid there, wondering if an ignorant unmuzzled lockjaw, mistaking flesh weapon  
for sustenance  
would properly mimic what vicious glacier  
was forming down there;  
this feminine pain as natural as a birthmark

i went home afterwards, shaking and  
singing a song that held broken notes.  
set a flameless fire to  
that skirt. never picked my hair into  
an updone pyramid of curls again.  
not when an earthquake triggered by  
endless shivers is what to call this body now.

i blocked his number. exchanged an extra ten minutes on my walk home  
for a couple deep breaths— my lungs expanding like canyons, the distance between us, a flare of  
nostrils and  
tight fist wrapped around my father's pocket knife  
never again would i take a stroll through the park  
without a leash gracing my starched fingers.

everyday  
i promise the wind that  
tomorrow will never belong to him.  
yet i open my door, and the first gust  
tattoos his name on the nape of my neck  
engraves his fingerprints  
into the small of my back.

You are never supposed to love  
what has tried to kill you  
But don't we all find ourselves  
dancing in the snow, knowing an avalanche  
is imminent?