

*Mostly to uncover the reality of my destructive hunger*

He gave me nothing to eat but photographs of other people eating meat. Cooked and raw, half-gone and about to be sliced. In the photographs the people looked relaxed and not very hungry. But first they were killing the animals with their careful machines. This was before clumsy hands came to the collective mauling. And before the children danced carefully in their ironed clothes at their little table. It all looked delicious. The shiny weapons and thick spats of flesh and slavering mouths and families. He did this in order. In order that I might see how feeding is done.

*Mostly to uncover the reality of my closed fist*

He pressed needles between my fingers to see if I would bleed, and I did. Bled through the tiny pricks. Tiny red dots that didn't spill, torn tracks of skin. Needle hitting bone. Prick. Prick, prick. Fingernails made crescents deep in the supple yellow mount of my palms. I kept moving. Near Vine, wavering palm trees bent toward dirty streetshops but didn't touch. People walked on stars and spat gum, phlegm. Flashed new tattoos and private piercings. Held hands. Some held needles in their arms or a memory. I pressed tighter, closed my mouth around my teeth. My closed hands made two needled fists. They bled from their infant pores. I couldn't feed them, couldn't stroke them, couldn't give them up.

*Mostly to uncover the reality of my inferior mothering*

He orphaned me. I had no one to smother me into silence. No weary arms to fall into or out of, no lap to lay across where leather and buckles lash me, no green twigs to sting a deeper color into my flesh. No eyes to follow me into the dark where I could starve and cry *I hate you. I hate you.* I even gave birth to an orphan. I smothered him into silence. I dropped him on his beautiful head when he let go of my breast. I let him be laughed at and I let him look at me as I did nothing. I left him in the woods and I left him for dead. Still, he doesn't hate me. No matter how many times I snap him in two.

*Mostly to uncover the reality of my sulfuric teleportation*

He fed me gris-gris & roux as the universal Mardi Gras mechanics slowed down (however much) the impossible sleep. *Jolie, jolie* he said, rocking me Robeson-voiced against the stars' weightless moorings. Chased, broken, flat against the impenetrable sky I surrendered from above and could see again. He showed me his favorite neon sign below:

DESTROY THE PANIC MONUMENT

and in the gulf the frantic bodies flickered like shrunken reeds. *The science fiction of what you really want for your children frays all the contested edges*, he says. This leaves a feeling like floating on a cold buckling sea, foam spilling over the bow of whatever interim vessel one might choose to cling to —

