Unraveling

A year later and the window
is open. A year later and the hard blue sky
is still washing out the flush
from your cheeks. The sun wraps itself around your
throat and I continue
to stare into my tomato soup. All the
static that is bleeding from your mouth, your nose,
your eyes, fades to
brilliant silence while
we sit at the oak table. All the old
men in their pork
pie hats toss breadcrumbs out to call the children
from the merry-go-
round. Gathered around, they peck
and pick at the ground
with their feet and as they lift their arms
the t-shirts spread like wings. You place your hand
on my thigh and I
answer that the ravens are all
white here; they always have been.

I’m Changing My Answer to Door 3 because I Didn’t Understand the Rules

Let’s say
I came home and found the
lights off, found
the door cracked open, found myself
taking in the whole
scene, your limp
body on the bed, the bottle of
pills, and I shut the door behind
me and started
the car back up. I went out for a burger and
shake, stopped at the
gas station on the corner for a
pack of cigarettes.

Let's say instead that
you remembered your mother
had been addicted to painkillers your entire
life. The neighbor called me
at my office
-no- I had
come home from work early that
day, and this time, I still had a
couple in the pack. So that's how the paramedics found
me, smoking one on the porch, because
you had placed the pistol in
your mouth and written the biography
of our love all over the bathroom
wall.

Let's say this time I called 911
and you were taken to the
hospital. The baby
didn't make it, and it was the reason
all along. I knew because you'd told
me. Or there wasn't a
baby at all, and that had been the reason instead.
Whichever; either way I held
your hand as the
sun came up.

Let's say anything
besides that I came home, and you'd
made lasagna again, and we
watched game shows
until we couldn't keep
our eyes open anymore.

Coming Home

I.
I was watching
as the wolves split open the scar
across your neck, and ripped out the stitches that held your sternum
together. The blood flooded over
your breasts and pooled in small lakes in the crestfallen
snow. I moved closer to the car,
smashed and
tangled amongst the fractured winter tree,
to light a cigarette in the effigy burning soft
dirges against the pale sun. You gurgled
a breath. Your lungs and heart beat against the exposed
ribcage as the beasts ripped away layers
of muscle and sought
marrow with their gnashing teeth.
I would move closer. I would
lift your head and pour smoke into your mouth
as though you were drowning.
I would note that,
after all,
there was no contrast between the crimson and the lily
white.

II.
We moved into your parents' cottage on the
Pacific that April. You
would lay out in the yard as I mowed the
lawn and then I would join you with
a glass of lemonade.
The wind blew through the fir trees and, at your whispered command, I prepared the soil. I opened up your forearm with the kitchen knife. Split the veins and butterflied the vascular tissue. Stopped at your shudder. The poppy seeds scattered into you and slid between the radius and the ulna, taking root. I sat there, watching, so they grew up your shoulder, blooming white across your breastbone and into your chest cavity. Opened the seam in your esophagus and brocaded your neck with frills. Through the summer I tended to you; shearing away the raw flesh and opening your abdomen to let the garden breathe. Every morning I cut the flowers away from your cheeks to look into your eyes, to prepare a bouquet for that evening's meal.

III.

_Escher was always my favorite you_ whispered here, whispered a thousand times before as we lay awake at 2 A.M. Your back twisted and the spine snapped as I pressed you flat up against the museum wall, pulled your arms up over your head to keep you from fighting back. I could feel the gathering footsteps seeking your exposed navel, noting the outline of your bra. I followed the railway spikes through your palms, there between the static art while you cringed and gulped beneath me. And you opened your mouth
hunggrily, letting me
slide my tongue into you
into you
into you.

**Deus Ex Machina**

Every day is a conclusion
lately.
I scrub myself raw in the pyre, I march
down
the street with a head in my
    hands
dripping blood victoriously. The
curtain
shuts off the sound, floods my nose,
gags
me and cuts off my fingers at the second
knuckle.

    Yet, there are moth-holes in the
    obsidian
    screen. The audience fleshes out the air
and
struggles to claw my throat while I drown under
    their
    passions. Every morning I wake up to the second act; the
digital
    flash that carves red shadows into the wall,
improving
    my pallor as I sleep through the insomnia.
Ixiptlatli

I.
I was staring out the
window when the crimson shots pierced
the horizon
left sodden streaks
through my hair
you were screaming through a bloodbath in the next
room
and even after I
burned him with a cigarette
27 times
and crushed his elbow with a
hammer the
man beside me claimed the
sky was simply the purest azure he'd
ever seen

II.
The sun was bleeding
pouring down lighter fluid that burned through pastures
through breezes leaving rustling leaves rustling in the wind
holding open rifts in the sky where you
and I saw the clouds move to
sneak glances through the holes
in Orion's belt
and listened to the ocean's
last rasping breaths as you

III.
handed me the knife

IV.
I knew you wouldn't cover your eyes or
drown out the sobbing
with the year old earmuffs
first the bloodsplatter
then the peeling of muscle
from muscle
from tendon and bone
the grass was scorched to brown
but the still beating
heart threw out the
summer's first rain

I’ve Been Killing You For Years

I woke up in a cold sweat again.
So I sat down to write you a letter.
Sat down to run my fingers through my hair and lick my lips.
Another mark of pen on paper.
Another hollow-tip inking up on your forehead and
making a canvas of the front door.
The back of your head another concave
with stalactites dripping down to the linoleum.
I dry dusted the furniture.
I ran the vacuum and polished the porcelain.
I wrote you four more letters.
They all ended with my hand grasping my
rushing heart.
Sometimes I stare up at the ceiling and wonder if it was
more.
If maybe the dog bleeding in the
gutter or the ax in my hand
weren't really you after all.
My eyes and breath both focused on a nameless panic
hidden in the shadows
I had to take a shower.
Had to let the carnal minutia of your existence drain
out of my ears.
I took up crochet recently.
The needle and hook pull you together so beautifully.
Dearest Hope

The lady in charge told us the children were out in the pen. Shuffling about, snuffling with their snouts, rolling around in the mud. A few dozen lithe bodies roiling happily in each others' filth. A social worker came out with a slop bucket. You mentioned that you wanted one with a good set of ribs as she began to fill the trough. I said we're burning daylight as they gathered around. We took the boy back home, took him out back, I set him down near the block. Decapitated him with one swing, while you started getting the apple pie together. I slit his gut open to let the juices run out and the steady drip drip of the last vestiges of humanity echoed the hose as I washed the blood from my hands.