

BECOMING AN ANGEL

First, you put down your pistol
and untie the woolly creature.

She has blood in her eyes.
You wipe her clean and give her

a look of glass and fire.
She will not forget your mercy.

Then you must burn all your books.
They are full of hate and necessity.

You are too much in the air to be filled
with the poison of philosophers.

When this has been done,
bathe in an elixir made of baby's breath

and milk.
Make sure everything leaves you

in a last gasp
of normalcy.

When you are clean,
call your mother.

Tell her you walk on water
and no longer need her to hold you

to the earth.
Tell your friends you are spirit

and memory.
Tell them if they call your name,

you will not respond.
Tell them you are beyond the blue.

When they leave
and you are alone -

take the pistol
and look into the fragile Heaven.

THE LONGEST WINTER

Dinner is on the table
by 5 p.m.
It is in his nature
to abide time. He wears his heavy coat and
she waits by the fire to warm his robe.
This evening the stars are black
with cold. He kisses her
hands rest
near his heart.
She was 12 when he traded his
best traps.
With 6 girls, they
would have taken less.
On the stove the stew boils,
a tub of hot water for soaking.
The barn has already been cleaned and locked.
The sheep and horse wait for light
to erupt.
She pulls the blade from behind
the knitting and touches it. The moose head
smiles. They wait
for the hunter to retire.

THE WANTING WITCH

The wanting witch
meets me at the corner
of my failures.

She gives me a script - it's supposed to make
you happy but I always
forget to open
my mouth.
My lips are permanently
blue. I
use my hands to pry open
epiphany.

The wanting witch teaches gravity.
She kicks me for losing
and for being young.

At times, I think the birds
in the sky will drown me,
like they know
who's unfit for the air and the envy
of clouds
becomes apparent.
The diamond sun burns my eyes
in retribution.

The wanting witch
says you have been lonely
without me -

She sends me to be
where you've been.

It stinks of your
antiquity.

Knowing you had us both,
I practice
the faraway mythology
or the curse.