TRY TELLING YOURSELF YOU ARE NOT ACCOUNTABLE TO THAT GREAT MOTH TIME

after Adrienne Rich

With her hand inside me
the doctor announces
her mother & sister are dead

Ovarian cancer *ate them up*
she says then makes a sharp
noise like a child pretending
monster, or to snack on
monsters

I too worship deadness
in all the wrong ways—
for its evidence

At the bar I know men
who stumble around
hollering out *poon* like
the name of some
long-bodied & pelted
animal teenage boys
hunt with BB guns

SHE SPRUNG OCEANS & TOLD THEM TO BE SALTED. SMOKED VOWELS & TOLD THEM TO LINGER. FASTENED RIBS INTO A CAGE & CALLED IT EMPTY. ATE FIRE & CALLED IT NEED. CAST LIONS & ROARED WITH PLEASURE. ROLLED OUT CARPETS OF GREEN DESIRE. SHE CREATED MAN & MAN DEMANDED HER KNEES. DUG FINGERNAILS INTO THE LEATHERY SKY & RIPPED FORTH, BEARING STARLIGHT. & O IT BURNED BLUE UPON HER.

wreath of guillotines
lawn bloomed from iron stars
an extinct snowbird: roadkill
silk asylum woven
with stolen hair

Patriarchy gnarls girls
into bonsai trees
& shames men into sad gods

a girl braids her
sister's hair with
her fingers long
pine fingers
braiding her
sister's long hair
smells pine
needle a girl
needs her sister
like fingers in
hair a girl is a
pine braided to
its sister needle
in the eye of the
girl sister in the
knuckle of the
long split pine
where o what is
a sister if not
splinter threaded
through finger
after finger her
sister's hair
braided to her
hair braided to
her sister's
hair so long o so
long that
splitting
sharpness
girlhood

manifest desert landscape bleaching fear in & out of failing hands snow crusting the silence of a windshield atlantic wheatfields flatlining to the harbor *AMERICA* the shoplifter

CARYATID (n): stone carving of a draped female figure; pillar supporting a Greek building // *(v):* the action of holding up what heavy marble you are carved from but do not belong to // *(adj):* built to last through ruin but not to inhabit // *Etymology:* In a Florida mall parking lot a friend tells me the word originated in a small village; the villagers needed something pretty to carry the weight of their houses

GIRL: long stone throat
of a well
& creature at the bottom
of a well
& bucket slithering
its wires through to the bottom
of the well

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