2000

Negative spaces

Anne Elizabeth Pepper

Iowa State University

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Negative spaces

by

Anne Elizabeth Pepper

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Major: English (Creative Writing)
Major Professor: Neal Bowers

Iowa State University
Ames, IA
2000

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Graduate College
Iowa State University

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Anne Elizabeth Pepper

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

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INTERSTICE
Negative space

As there is no name
for things that go bump
spaces that fill in the unoccupied
line, one must construct words from
formless air, superlineate, cross all t's, dot
the eyes
draw an ocular frame in which to
fit a meaning that submits itself only to the creator,
leaves listeners to decipher their own codes, modulates
within each set of vocal chords, becomes memorable only in
relation to the thing being compared to, not against.

Exampol - fenetiks wud allowe won too reinvent meening
without the care of cross-intellechewallism, all this becomes is

blah blah blah blah blah ... nosensense non syne.
Within the system of 0 and 1, everything becomes
pixels that need defrazzlement, can be zipperered up or down
into contrivance, contraband of the frantic engineer mind, inmate
of a self-made prison, our relation to the word itself cannot be found.

Yodeling in Latin is more beneficial than a series of
majestic loops and stylistic gashes in the page.
Sculpted

I grapple it lately
unfortunate absence of centre
pliable skein of grey matter winds
through my head like bared wind

an extra thread of hair entangled
in rubber band, wound and wound
around it to merge into another, defines
its features by semierotic chaos.

My hands rake a presence in clay, bland
prominances rise and fall with foggy breath,
the drop-cloth becomes white lace lingerie,
fingers smooth ripples into mounds.

I feed it mirth and banter, embody it by
moisturizing, reconditioning, smoothing,
polish, wax, or exfoliation. The it still
remains featureless, a blighted phantasm

on the chilled tip of mirrored tongue, should
be lashed to stillness, but instead swarms
vague and full of meaning, its mannequin model sister
lies prone in dusty corner, eating air and flaunting
a chipped paint smile to glean worshippers,

inhales radio beauty commercials like laxatives. A pill
can cure everything from migrant eyes to lapidary
intentions, crazed writings in stone, chiseled with fine
bone tools draped in tresses bent from fair heads.
Patchwork

I am pieces, torn. Crazy-quilt put together with glue, zigzags connecting naugohyde, brastraps, bits of bone, ivory chalk, wax paper.

I am overstuffed, mad with manuscripts, expired marriage licenses, bloody cotton, cinnamon sticks, calamine lotion, dead flies, cardboard boxes.

I cover odors that need hidden, skin that seeps powder, lotion, smoke, grease, rubber. Steal these for my own, ignite fires for whitecold toes,
give refuge from refuse.
Small presence

Small presence, that is for me, mine, intact. has not always been around to smile, grope,

please me. If you want to stay, sit, be admired, converse, listen to me play some Chopin, or

Liszt. I've even been working on Rachmaninoff, dead man with a stretch that mimics playdough. I
cannot quite reach you, you thing quite inside, surfacing, you do, yes you do, if you would

let yourself be. You are and you are again. Can malinger, fly, plague, castigate. Master this

immense life. You can witness a being, your own strength, coming into focus, flush and furious.
Breathing Things

She inhabits closets,
becomes intimate with
blue velvet, tulle, musty
spider drawings.

One small dim light
illuminates its still
calm, a sighing breath
her house exhales in
time with her own. No
mirror cracks here, brown
shoes calm, white drowsing.
Plastic wrap enshrines a
gaping o-hole, shoesize,
madmark of past worshiper.
It siphons raspy air, house
lung, gum wrapper crackle.

Inside closet door, a shrine to
loneliness. Kindness steps
outside to let her occupy-
small company. Sienna light
somersaults out as well,
licks her toe as batteries tick
out. She remains, sits in its
pit, feeling included.
Schizophrenic shed

She huddles in the streak
of sunlight that pierces her
blue eyes, hands of vices, a barbie
head, hair knotted in dirt.

Its body is outside the tin doors, a
decapitated reminder of the voices
that speak a forgotten language, change her tones,
we climb inside to the orange shag remnant.

Peeking out, a bandaid heals the headless nub, I
follow the S curve of her lynching string
looped over an eternal highheeled foot, half-
buried in dirt and chewed to the heel.

We grasp each other's hair and braid the
silky strands together, wiggle sandy toes until
they pop, white plastic record player skips
old mcdonald old mcdonald, had a had a --

she blooms into teeth and her inner weather
beats her fists to her porcelain head, she is
shattering back and forth, but with EIEIO, EIEIO, it's over --
except for new childbass voice that sneers,
shit, I eat you up honey.

I lick my teeth and scoot back to a corner, an ache
fractures where our siamese twinning ended,
in the headsnarl there is warmth and a buzzing that
she bends closer to hear.
Hanging Holly Hobbie

I own my own
sleeping head, invent
a rocking bed to shut
lidless eyes in.

It doesn't fit, this
stupid calico, its straps
wind like bad wind.
I do not dress myself.

You cannot blame
a dolly for her state-
ments, state of mind.
I would choose another
name, Holly never became
rare, or wanted. Maybe
Juniper, Pearl, or Trina
Best of all pinata, for it fits tightly.

I am strung, neckwise, completely
airborne, on a steeple-spire,
child's bedpost, hung
limply after she throws

me to red shag, interminably
amused by my trampolining
hair, yellow flag, banana
peel, paper streamer.

I want my bed to sleep
in, soft satin pillow, not this
high rise plunging, deep
death of elevation.
premedicated

i take one and one half per day little blue pills -depression- break them in half with angular eye -teeth to expose chalky white insides, just temporary ingested sanity

trace esophagus, downwaydown, comfort the muted bruise under my left hand nextto pinky finger -- shiny paled skin, -invisible - tracings of eager separation rise blotchy marred to the skintips, felt divorce of mother from father -- a golden haloed ring of dis-ease, april 6 1999 in court then a wish and 27 candles. birthday equals divorce.

i throw rice, rose petals versus fits and suck small pills au jour -- my veil for adjudication, the judge's flat atonation. subtraction of i do. candles are blown out.

there's a hearing, a saying, a memory in the near that slips sideways on my marriage sheets, hurtles toward hardfloor headfirst, quite engaging:
something old something new ... my borrowed, swallowed, something blue.
STRUCTURE
Changeling

Mother wears a fitted girdle
waxes her legs supple as deer skin
parades violently through
silicone valleys in the near-dark.

Laughs at city boys who fear gray mice
as she scrambles for breath, reaches
stealthily for her pitchfork, spikes the
small meat to the barn wall, yodels Bach.

Topples precariously in needle-heels
dyed a deep crimson – cooks over cake,
poodle-skirt frosting. Licks a slender
manicured finger, pokes its marbled
surface and a belly button is realized.

Transformed, she becomes 40 years
conservative, plain-clothed, muddy
and freckled, wears overalls stitched
handmade, did the buttonholes herself
goes barefoot over rock salt, feels saved.

Cannot remember who killed j.r. doesn't
care, watches reruns of "I Love Lucy"
in black and white, munches popcorn
under the severe scrutiny of schnauzer's
yellow-brown eyes.

She sucks in two children's worth of stomach, distends and
goes portly, suddenly feels
the divorce fit her like a corset.
scarification

she collided with linoleum, slid up the stairs with a grind, then sunk down to writhe.

no marking, but blood punching to get out, an isolated pointillism, she beat time like a pendulum.

bruises remain on holiday, later the pain man forgets to visit as well, then a pucker stays on, a rounded bowl under the skin more sanitary, doesn't stain the stairwell. Her friends finger the shin depression,

eyebrows shocked, shank locked to her body, she tells stories of bone chips, dried blood, and gristle.
misogamy

Mother cans tomatoes, shredding fibers with quick flicks into stoneware bowls, fills

Kerr jars brimful. Water boils for sealing juice in, preservative, seed. I stack downstairs,

harbinger of patient pickling, that ticks in stacks under carpeted stairs for years.

She is upstairs, singing full loud, Handel's Messiah, in Alleluia chorus, her deity is reborn in song, while

daily expiration sighs in her basement. We sit, wait for a boil, slow baptism. Mother,

sweating basil, blows torrid tea swells, adds honey. Remembers last can she opened

with her muscled fingers, tough wrist, how it burned nostrils cracked on its roost.
Dainty sulphur (Nathalis iole)

You pick the paper
up, the fragile wings,
a yellow powder butterfly
held at an unnatural angle

the parchment assesses
value, pins a diamond
like a thorax to its carat weight,

clarity, color. A trace of jaundice
on a gem reduces its worth, and
without scaled pigment an insect
will slowly die. Open the jingling door,

feel your limbs assessed
by vision, a grinding machine will halt its
metallic whir - see a man in flying lapels
swish-swish towards you with a corduroy smile

he will say nothing but
stop abruptly at stainless steel sink - watch -
diamond powder comes off the jeweler's finger-
tips as he washes dust under
water, dries hands, asks with his eyes.

hold the wingtips of the paper toward
him, then the weight of its body, a gem. Say, "it
is special, a momento. I want it reset."

hand it to him. his pupils will remain fixed
on the neat folding of your hands, avoiding
the utterance. he will don an eyepiece. study. "an H color jewel is not

worth resetting," he will murmur, "particularly a small marquis,
such a difficult stone to manipulate." his creased finger will point. "see that
small flaw, minute tint -- like a dainty sulphur?"
a small cough during the words-. he'll
drop it in your open palm - small flutter.
His lapels are silent; embarrassed.
"I'm afraid I can't help you" -- he'll pass you the limp paper, leave scaleless marks where fingerprints rubbed ink, and the diamond will struggle in your pocket.
lock up

my mother
ankle-chained herself
to her Singer, wound
its bobbin round her
tapered index finger

watched, waited - planned
its purplish tip welt. I
hear from our neighbors,
who watch binoculared,
from darkened windows

deep-blue in night. She
darns the same gold
toed sock, rips stitches out,
starts over again. Repeats
four times, stops -

smiles warily. Daddy's
still a gold toe man, now
he buys new when pink
nail shines through. Does
not accept change,

writes monthly checks
for mother's shirt-pattern
squares, handkerchief
drapes, calfskin napkins,
ignores a clanking chain.
iron pyrite

Daddy, eyes
deceive little, a
tongue trickier when
licking false words.

Fall like plaster off
roof of your mouth,
dry the air to sand -
we are desert.

That gold is real, enlacing
your neck, your herring
not red as you hoped, but
bone-white, chipped me.

My mother dislikes
ornate, shiny, fishy things.
This known, I lash to
internal tears, hide a flowing.

I tell you, daddy - never
lie, I can see words glistening
in your pan. We sit as ceiling
sprinkles us in golden dust.
Diminutive departure

When at eight o'clock,
Or was it five, I made
A movement, only singly
Disjointed, somewhat
Smug – toward a wooden door

Battened down, in wool, blue, buttoned
I felt flattened by the wind between
Two doors, one inside, the other out –

Blustery, my face blistered ice-cold
Eyes simpered in overcool
I wished for a satchel, a silk scarf,
A harlequin's hand to hold.

I stepped as if sautéed in oil, vernacular
Curses down the stairs, quilted underfoot
In down, white like snow. My hair
Melting under the baroque of the moment.

The filets of icicles buried thigh-high
In mounds, once earthen, brownbaked,
Mums in ochre hangover, barely
Brambles, the larger hardy reds more vivid.

Briefly I enjambed boot in crevice,
Hole without small visitor, once, twice,
Thrice-covered, he holed up, wintry,
Sleeping in fetal, warmed and winning.

And myself, mortal as malice.
Grey

We once used
pilled wool to wean
ourselves from ingrown
mothers, replaced ourselves –

suckling instead
meatless chunks of warm, grey
lambscomb, imitating musty oatmeal,

shearing the disruption
between teat and airborne
independence, unwanted milk –

children divorced,
connections severed,
dismayed apoplexy bleats
dullen neutrals.
infirm

my tongue a meat
thermometer, popping
out when cooked
through.

temperature, a foreign,
unwieldy matter - i
measure damage by
degree.

a plaster wall fell toward
me, divided toes four
and five, pigs none and wee
wee all the way home.

is this pork then, my unlikely
blue puffin, so unruly a
brute, a shoe is a bruise
to the eye.
Our Florida driveway

You never blew
snow out of our
Florida driveway. Never
demonstrated a birthday

unless reminded. This
did not just become, was
evidently always yours,
purposeful. Dusting -

women’s work, as
babies, scrubbing toilets,
mallingered in strip malls
buying Hallmark drippage.

That silver car was cleaner
than your shirts, rolled to
sleeve, ironed into early
deaths. You were strong

in them, their stricture
pleased you. You never
kissed our gay black mannequin,
his headless fiberglass form covered

over in bright scarves, Chinese
stork umbrellas. Add-on balloon
head. His name became Nick, although
he was dickless. But, you were out. You

were partying. You never blew
snow out of our Florida driveway.
Diaphanous (the wedding)

My disposition vague
stretching early to waking behind
moth wings
lace curtains, I rummaged
a church sale
remnant, once a simpering tablecloth,
flaccid as crumbs,
a social expectation.

Soft eager mouths, wine
over flowering bellies, missives of tradition
request my reply in earnest by deadline.

The morning flows, orbed
light filtering over
wooden slats of rippled floor
damaged in dapple, since
overflowing, the seepage of
comfortable slumber in slats, the
fingers of condensed air.

My makeshift throws itself back
through slanting mirror
antique vanity with clawed foot to
demonstrate the curve
behind sleepwilted eyes, now blooming
fairy dust. I trace

buttons, my fingertips through
outline, the fabric
overdense smooth, no tarnish would bake
itself into silk, taffeta –
nor does a fingerprint
dent a perfect O, simply defines
itself against a backdrop of second
skin, perfecting the eager threads,
marriage
of garment to the blind eyeholes.
Capricornicus

In barlight you seem frozen
icepick sharp, could shatter a
warmblooded will with words.
But smelling you is superheated

such an attractive contradiction.
Like dawn in winter with smooth
rice pudding. Soft rain in mown
hay and dried tobacco. Always

and never, our words would meet
and divide nations, veto planets
out of their orbits, funnel our hearts
into the dead of silent space. I left

you. I burned a collarless shirt as
incense, slept on photographs
stained by sun and your hands. Wore
gloves and got a sunburn. It

will not follow you, that scent. Musk
of dog, but sweeter yet, and the
newly-fired gunpowder of cologne on
the cuffs. It remains as I wish it gone.

If I turn now, in this place we came
not lately, I see myself reflected. There
are shards of ice left where your
fingers touched the fire and won.
Drizzle

He can identify
over 30 shades
of grey. Rides hump-
backs of cumulus
in slippery groginess

preceding deep sleep. I
ask him, quietly, to certify
my mood, specify
a shade to suit it - dub it
coil of mail, or tempered

matte veneer. His
eyelids have layered
themselves over
sight, visions of
mottled lapidarians,
porous sedimentary

statues, death-pallor
of pasture wall, all
become nightshades.
He peers through grass
on a dreambelly stained
with drizzle.
Benefit of the doubt

A notecard scribbled
with these words, why
can't you ever give me
the ...?

During a shower again
repetitious scribblings
on glass invited by
warmed mist, blares

backwards written in
a style not familiar,
same mediocre
phrase. I step out

to bare ashen teeth,
check bathroom mirror,
it only shines brightly,
smeared message

still blaring through
hot water behind me. I cannot
spell deceit with foreign
handwriting, not his

markings. I study
body smears, run bleach
and scalding water over
the perpetual stain.
Earlier

Whiteout came hurricaning through
my alley. Pigeon-loft became
vacant, feathers left floating with
flakes. Rows upon rows of chilly eyes.–

floor-to-ceiling windows, waiting
expectantly to open a view, cover a night,
return a rock dove glance. Viewing here
is burnt brick umber and incandescent light.

And now white. I wait the white to bring
a tread my cat recognizes. Down a long hall
past graffiti rudy loves liz for a good time call
512-897-8876 two boots press cold into carpet.

The cat a statue in windowell, sits
pompously licking his paw, watching one-eyed, the door. No movement, save the tongue
flashing, I am suddenly snowblind.
February 15

Our blowdryer
becomes a single
owner, hand-held
device.

You lose yourself
in aisles of pity
while I move,
struggle, extract

heavy discontent.
Dusty futon leaves its
dirty hoofprints
on yesterday's happy

valentine. Now
its smudge imbeds
itself in my thumbprint,
black thorn.

We picked each leaf
on that fichus, carried
them all together,
grouped and trim.

Last year it swelled
with its own meaty
weight, now I pick
brown flakes off,

turn the whir of
hairdryer to break still
air, watch flakes
crumble and float.
Halflife of smoke

I still had a key, knew
the obvious combination, same
as my old address. Had committed
a minor crime earlier, seeing
you pass a note to a stringy blond
via sticky tray. I gagged and
felt your ring's absence, a month
in absentia. Put my seventh glass
donw and howled with laughter, a
cry of mercy unrecognized.

My ex-waitress muscles felt the
weight of the reply, the coy play
at fragility, worth. My thumb
curled into its opposing palm. Stoli
and cranberry sweating itself out.

I played at vehicular suicide at
closingtime, drove into jumping curbs,
disheveled mulch. Strutted to our ex-
door listening to t.v. buzz behind it. Blew
a smokecloud in through opened door.

That cloud never left.
Light smear

My mascara runs tonight, blurring the blueredblue flashing flashing, me tucked into molded plastic seat of autojail.

Honeycomb barred from officers, cushioned bravely in tidy raspberry-blue. I wonder if they iron and starch color into full bloom.

Hear Him between the frontseat radio fuzzing, saying, "no, it's my car," then "nonono ... I don't ... her ... arrest- .... " My fingerprints pose no threat to plastic, smear themselves over the dimpled surface, not through, as his words though me, skip lightly out, "it's mine."

His tongue is a diseased weapon longing to be cut out.
Bijou Sympatico

Pedal-back seats
swooshing madly, red runners
of feet smudge the dark
through, sticky mashed
crackles of husk -snap-

underfoot, buttered, and above
naked wrists wind
roughly, mine smooth,
milkyfilm white, glowing —
pale moon, wanes

when yours waxen, tangles swiftly
onscreen
--windblown hair, tarbaby
halflight, fingers filter
intricate petals in dusk.

Caress each tip
memorize infinitesimal weaves
in silken flesh, matters
knot the language in flesh.

Faces backlit, I hold symmetry
to my hushed mouth, sip it
dry to brittle, feel your words slip
past me in nightshade, fading

to find sympathy in darkness.
32

CAESURA
Angler

Was it he who took
my cerebellum away, swooped
away as my swaying body laxed
into mushy puddle?

I was caught with a shiny forked
prong, lip-locked on the prize. Last I
recall is brick-blood, blackness pulled
over on me and silver aluminum wave.

Could it be symbolic of fornication
the feminists shriek, the construct-
ion of the fornix, how the sounds loop
around the thalamus like lubricating jelly?

Fishing is offensive. It's the bait of men
to women, the self-serving male organ of kill
the worm and set the hook, boat's prow driving
itself through liquid water. I'm telling you.

I'm telling you there's a sure incidence
of a clitoral image there, and penile
intentions, care to read it into the fishing line -
study the smoothness of the bobber, up and down.

Suckerfish, bottomfeeder, your fins and
water breathing leave you gasping as air
pulls the gills, forces flesh from bone. It will
be good eatin, and go down easy. Keep thinking that.

The tickle of dying fluid to corpus callosum,
means seminal goes vaginal, and taut
ventricle, pons, become limp as
dead fish, eyes gone bad in the sun

whiteness comes then
a bland dryness to the scales.
calamine

that summer, we
shared the netting
with bloodletters,
their curlicue tongues

sticking us in the dark.
Smeared lotion over
ourselves like holy
water, the divine itch

delivering us from
slumber. In those
loose windless moments
before sleep hit, i

heard their tinny screams,
funneling their small
noise past pinna into
incus, small-shelled

cochlea. I prayed
a noiseless dirge, lips
tracing the eucharist, this
is my blood, spilled

for you.
rounder

habitual, like
my callused feet
beneath me, you
contest my door's
stability, falling

obliquely, your
long form amiss,
lip torn, dried blood,
collapsed clumsy.

Back again, my
3 am welcome mat,
drowsing and rummy
roused by Anais Anais,

Steelman love potion
number nine, droning
background. Chamberman, piss-
baron, you win ass

prizes in a dead heat, close
nudie bars with a hand
up someone's skirt, falling
hard outside responsibility.

Inevitably, I, chamber-
mistress, listening after
record skip skips, for
a scattered breathing,

limp, soggy thing.
telesthesia

a thumb no bigger than it
was at age 5, further your whole
right hand, your first act of violence
against the thalidomide.

the first time we met, you
slid into my palm like a tired
fish, the skin scaly and dazed,
small and dry.

that and your cockeyed
smile, the drawl from the right
eye, you saying i'm the lizard
boy, i can see out both i's at the

same time. we slept in
separate beds for two weeks
but found strange hook glyphs
in linen sheets, heard jingling
censers, discovered patchouli
between our toes. you called,
said nothing, hung up, kept
a rose scarf in the window for me,

ran away to vegas. i could hear
the exhaust in the vw sputtering
over the border, i wore the scarf
to free breakfast every sunday.

now i hear your asthmatic
baritone flap open, whistle shut.
you should quit smoking dope,
keeps me awake nights, your flopping
sleep, seventeen hours away.
slush

a photograph sits neatly on
rounded corner of kitchen cupboard
above the filled sink, smiling.

you pick it up look behind
while scrubbing the blank-faced dishes

no name, date written, just Kodak Kodak
Kodak, like the bear in winter
alaska whiteout without the i.

where, you wonder, has the i gone?

pictures without names are unclaimed
footprints in slush, could
belong to a new-booted neighbor

or ex-lover smoking djarum
clove cigarettes, your favorites before
quitting, two years ago, smoke stung your eyes.

now the soap-sudsy edges dance in
wavers through your saline lids, as
visions of the bread/tobacco aisles,

hands kneading hands, finding
the sweet cancer stalks, plucking them
gently, as once he fed his hands
your breasts, nipples, you
remember the name,
and the i.
Lullaby for one in love

"Getting company inside one’s skin." — Maggie Scarf

The world is black
I am round with its
circumference, thick
as intercourse,

quite as tricky. My
pregnancy is fickle,
ticks in time with
cranky ankle, cracks in

pavement, breaks
mommy’s back. When
I slept sideways last
evening, a kick

boxer drummed his
pulse through
umbilicus, vein,
slickened cord of us.

I understood its
morse coding, a
tiny pounding, of
let me drown in you,

drown interminably
in you, my mother.
The tapping will not
end, blackness eats it.

Blackness hums it
to sleep.
The Stillborn

Love dies because its birth was an error.
- Susan Sontag

Your mouth echoes hello
it means goodbye, visiting in
that bright motel room where
lights had been oiled on, off.

No coffee percolating, ice
popping madly, but stillness
as before a storm, pewter grey.
Your pupils have no color
tonight, do not dilate. Trap
light, drain into the sieve that
empties nowhere. In the tempest
of the room, permanent dullness.

You stare through the pounding
next-door neighbors, contractions
against your wall, the fucking
on borrowed mattress.

You are expectant as a mother, birthing
something already alone and
without sweet air, trying to resuscitate
a drowned woman.

I am a pillar of sand, shaped by
birth fluids, drying quickly in
this slick light, crumbling gently
on a bedsheets of silica.
excide

if you do not
dither, it is easier -
removing a section
that will be missed,

yet is invisible to you
if female. That inner
pincushion that dr.
smear warned you

about, over his pinprick
scrutiny. You spread
before him, opened
like a stubborn tin can.

He prodded before, but
now is certain of infection.
It must be cleansed, wiped
pure, contained, away

away, away from his kind.
The needle is heavy inside,
hollow juice tip squeezing
pressure into pain.

You are motionless, as
thick needle is removed,
replaced with a whirring
wire, zips off the top,

placed in a jar submerged
in juice not your own.
Hard

Bloat that lingers
just below the belt-line, sweet juice
malingering, maybe
germinating. It is

not malleable, double-drop loaves into the
oven, but tender, hard
with a crust to the inside,
toast-warm.

Meat of the matter is second-course, how difficult
sitting becomes, in a spotless
apartment, bits of rare
flesh seeps out, juicy.

Stuck on cutting board, earlier
Dr. extracted the cauliflower
colored death, smelled it
blooming and cooked through,
slapped it in the pan

with the others.
puncture wounds

village people ymca radio blaring, you are a stone face with little nubs for ears useless creosote eyes that bumble and shake hell

she of leather jacket recently stolen picks at the scab of an argument with her eye tooth, jabs it neatly, sharp,

it erupts into sound. gales vibrate through her hair. now it's the cult, you are molten, dripping something transparent

when it touches her, it sears her eyelashes off, moves lower, she's hairless. When you lean to kiss her, a vacuum.
appetite

how grossly enamored, your smile sits on puckered head. Shoveling teeth nestle in her hair across a red checkerboard table. She sucks water in quick sticks through funneled straw, cannot drink quickly enough.

Her skin wrinkles, she is pink in raisin skin, slowly melting into liquid. You tell a magazine story, how loss is a gain. Plucking her ears with a sticky tongue, driveling tripe she cannot eat. You grow, how you grow thick with knowing, watch her whittle down girth with glittering knife of hunger, settle urgent rumblings with saliva, paper cuttings, swallowed as substitute.
"She sings like she's got a secret, and if you listen long enough, she'll tell it to you -- and only you."

- Linda Barnes

So abrupt, a shift in timbre, a pitch beginning deep, tremolo, to pincushion listeners' skin.

Snatching itself midbreath into canorous seduction, then, a denigrating sullen sempre.

Audience follows notes, beats time in suspicious taps, measure by measure legato through fermata.

Denouement is feral, fortifies itself on breathed air, pelts a startled crowd, fortis.
Real beauty

finds its breath
stilled by diagonal
sharpness.

Colors so vivid they
burst through stained
glass, like flour poured
on blood-violets, blue velvet.

Souls can hold
immeasurable depths
of wholeness resplendently
encased in mirth,
ribs, the jabbed
ego-centricities of self.

Wines, the flavor of
passion, merlots feel the smooth
lips of vine, slit fruit runs.

Grape frost between
bleached toes, smearing the
hunger through, coldprints on
spider-web, dewy, the
lattice of fine print, calliope
of dreams becomes realization.
Bane

Can you smell laughter between her eyes, her legs perfect, a perfect v?

Reach and pull, flex, bend, taste crunches, you do not believe it is inaccessible. O taste, taste dark hair, small goatee of widow's peak.

What hides there is malignant, but warm, will speak lullabies, stroke lips rouge. Contain a simple eloquence - drink the warmth, embrace her bane.
Canis lupus

You lured it, 
chewed and mumbled
carved it a new niche, 
in your seedy backyard -

behind the unmown 
grass, next to your 
high school gym, it 
trips soundlessly.

Dead vermin laced 
with promises, ever 
afters, scent of 
mutton and barley.

It takes only months 
to tame the yellow 
eyes to stalk your 
prize, stroke the

nesty fur, so thick. 
So thick it can be 
tasted with fingers, 
caught up and gobbled

eaten and kempt.