

## Happy 31st

Who wouldn't fear them, the neighbor women,  
their fingernails luminous, neat as prop moons?  
When they sent me to murder King Excitement,  
I hid like a light in his rafters. I made myself calm,

unknowable. I filed, as required, a report on return.  
They sang my name in the street. My head was gold  
& ivy. But then the newsprint notes began, slipped  
below my door: *Adventures are required to sprout*

*adorable hands & feet* or *Don't forget your mother suit.*  
Be good, in brief. But I was not good, always outside  
in a too-thin shirt, eyes to Orion, his glorious shoulder  
flickering red. The neighbor women cheered the night

I drank too much & blurted out it resembled a heart.  
A package arrived: a flipbook of Excitement sprinting  
spine to edge, man to bird, red feathers swarming  
his arms, his chest. The last pages blank, ominous.

They know I let him run. They're big on forgiveness.  
They want me to describe the heart. Point on this chart.  
Where on this spectrum of delicate to precious?  
Don't say *feral*, please. Don't say *mine*.

# Properties of Renaissance Drama

Here a table set for a banquet  
    all the crystal greased with thumbprints  
There the good silk here the best silk  
    no discernible difference

There father's banqueting coat  
    the tailor is tired of letting it out  
Here a portrait of father's father  
    father replaced the teeth with pearls

Here the alchemist wearing his rags  
    why should an alchemist ever wear rags  
There a poison confused for salt  
    and here an empty silver cellar

There mother talking talking  
    first to her children but then to no one  
Here mother listening to the walls  
    it's quiet too quiet call a doctor

Here mother's name chiseled across a cross  
    and wherever she isn't the hole of noise  
There father muffles his ears  
    these days it's always him muffling his ears

There brother licked with moonlight  
    now he's a stranger sprouting claws  
Here brother when morning breaks in  
    naked and trying to find his coat

Here brother looking for sister  
sister's usually holed up somewhere  
There something crying down in the basement  
sounds very hungry think we should feed it

There sister not watching brother  
through the gaps in her fingers  
Here father washing his eyes  
now where did mother hang the washing

There an alder full of starlings  
I think I see some people sitting in it  
Here it's dark lets turn on the lightning  
oh it's brother and sister sitting in it

Here the book where we kept the records  
and now just a bit of smolder  
There a doctor who says it won't live  
another says *if* it'll be wolf or devil

*doctor*  
*doctor come quick here*  
*there*  
*it's hatching*