

seed coat

i want to pile your hair on top of me like  
 hay  
 on a winter night  
 to smoke the oxygen stretching your lungs  
 and fill my brain with opium  
 i want to carve a niche inside your chest  
 and exist as a small animal in there  
 curled up  
 asleep  
 among your twig-soft ribs  
 lulled by the pulsing of your blood

the old wives spin stories of a  
 dryad, deep in the boughs  
 who craved the touch of humans  
 she cried and wet her lips  
 with the sweet, smothering truth  
 that no mortal soul would hold her  
 thorny skin, her rugged cheeks  
 so she could weep and weep and  
 curse the boughs  
 woven around her  
 all from the safety of her loneliness

i crushed my heart barehanded  
 and it keeps  
 writhing  
 in my grip, spiked into a chestnut burr

the stories end in the soft silence  
 of a tall, unyielding snow  
 as it tucks the dryad in, from head  
 to soil-black soles  
 to frosted cheeks  
 frozen in the curve of one last keen

i try to squeeze tears out  
 for me, for you, for her  
 but the spikes turn red and slick against my  
 palms  
 so i just freefall, dry-eyed  
 dreaming of any kind of warmth