

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