The Life Cycle of Cruelty

The other night, I dreamt I was maimed by him, again. This time, stabbed in the stomach. How hard it has been to not love him. He said: Don’t eat meat in front of me. I hate to see your teeth.

***

Crack open my sternum. Witness the clenching and unclenching of my heart. Rabid and quick as a dog off the leash.

***

In high school, I was reprimanded for “my womanly wile” by a woman with short hair. I swear to God. I looked at her hands decorated with fake gold rings and fingers fragile as carrots. I looked at my huge paws, the strong edge of my jaw, the smooth curve of my hips, and I knew I’d grow up to be a mean fucking bitch.

***

I always thought Silence of the Lambs was a love story. Had I been served a human kidney I would have said thank you and devoured it like a plum. If bothered by the screaming of the lambs, I would have sculpted a silence from their dead limbs. Piles of red and white pushed into the open, blue mouth of sky.

***

Meat on ice. Nights of oysters and talks of money and dick. Feeling too old to be wrong anymore. I recall the first man I fucked after my ex. I walked into his kitchen, naked, cold, dark blue, humming like a rising wave in a storm. I returned with a blizzard in my mouth and my filthy sock in my hand. Eat it, eat it, eat it, I said.

***

As a child, I chased boys on the playground, shoving them down face first in front of me when I caught them with their backs turned. Then, I would flip them over to see their faces, my little oysters of tears and sand, making a pearl for me.

***

There has never been anything to outgrow. I do not think it could have been given to me, crumpled up and hidden in his fist. Violence is my bone, my hair, my father, the very shape of me.

***

The other night a man brought his gun to my apartment. Black metal sinking into my pink couch. Night blended the colors together and I could not tell the metal from the cushion until my back was pressed against the cold.