

To Mary Shelley

when we say she is grieving
what we mean is that emotion has unseamed her
pushing through her fingertips like forceful spring shoots,
breaking earth, breaking skin, breaking bone

she is leaking from all her pulse points she is
flooding the room.

Biblical. Apocalypse is a messy, wet process.
Rebuilding, a parched one.

when we say she is grieving
we mean she is realizing life is defined by its inability to stop and resume
no break point no rest
we mean she is aching for her 19-year-old mythos.

she knows the most powerful lie she ever told
was that life was something you could stitch together--
limited--
tell that to the woman unbound unbounded
gushing all over the parlor--
all she wants is to feel self-contained

the closest she can come is picturing
bobbing in a boat
curled up on the deck and bound by soft sloping sides
but of course that won't do that won't do--
how good it would be to dig the needle into her neck
and sew a circlet, reattaching
reassuring her of her limits

she comes from a long line of feminists
and female suicides.
when grief tips an inkwell inside her
and blooms too big too dark
she can feel any number of skeletal hands grabbing at her wrists,
pulling down telling her how they are all
waterlogged.

maybe she herself is cobbled together out of corpses
that's how it's always felt right
a woman on the razor's edge of insane promise
perpetually 2 steps away from pitching herself into the Thames

what she can't face is being ripped open again,
spilling onto the bedsheets.

She knits herself back together.
I drop my copy of *Frankenstein* in the bath.
It floats and then dries
with a wave to the edges
doesn't close as fully or as tidily or as tidally but the binding still works--
the stitches dry out.
I wish I could tell her
that I think it makes the story more interesting this way,
so full of itself and water that it can't shut or shut up,
that we're both going to live on
but the drowning will change us.