

FRANKIE SPRING

the desert, the lake, the moor

I see the old woman walking in winter,
and I see the little shepherd girl
with soft green bonnet and awkward
bend in the knee, where as a baby
the wolves usurped her cradle. thereafter
she carried the crooked chunk of flesh
like a trophy to prove to her flock
she would die for them not once, but twice, three times

on the moor the long-tailed yellow bird
is disappearing, having heard the alarum
of human footsteps in the snow, he dives
down a cliff face and resurfaces
just above the gap-tooth smiling rocks
ashy and melancholy their fingers point
to the open sea. my companion the yellowtail
follows me to the place where the women
sleep, lighting a gloomy cabin with oil
lamps to grow and name young shadows

these two women lived on the top
of the hill, in a dream

they knit sweaters with reams of wool
from the sleet-gray sheep the young one
tended while the old one
bent-back at the loom
canned their sour winter fruit
from the vegetable garden,
rode the wild horse neither of them
could feed, through the forest and the
weeds and never did they venture
down the mountain.
the young and the old
stared off the cliff
each night, heads clouded like
the sky from hand-hollowed tobacco pipes
how the light caught their smoke rings in the
watercolor sunset