

*REVIVAL OF ROSEMALING*

*1. The Ruined Garden*

Everyone lost someone in the avalanche that year. Nights, we held dances in the ruined garden. Wolves wove the trail but stopped short of the fireline. The mountain refused to name what it knew. When a dog, child, or mitten went missing we wore miner's headlamps, bright sieves for thick dark. Everyone waltzed, but not everyone tangoed. Hard-packed snow tumbled, gathering speed, eating ice farmers, sentries, and skis. We shouted questions, but our questions stirred rocks. We had to learn not to talk—to move mutely, we of the valley—and to bury the bodies when spring thawed ice walls. Our dead came down perfect, red in their cheeks, palms flexed as if resisting the pyre.

*2. Marietta*

No one knew about the cabin. People thought I lived in town in a wooden house with a bright red door. No one had ever seen the house because the house wasn't real. I lived in a cabin on the outskirts of town. I had to haul my garbage to the dump. When someone got hurt, the ambulance came from somewhere else. No one could see the cabin from the road, although I could see the road and the bay. No one could see what I was doing or who I was with. All winter snow kept the shape of snow, sirens muffled, Amtrak derailed. Llamas stumbled into the field and slept standing up, manes brittle with frost. Once a hawk flew into the window. Once you dressed me up as a boy. Once you came home in a stranger's coat and shook strange snow onto the concrete floor.

*3. Crown Hill*

Stairs spiraled up to an attic filled with salt. We slept thin as tripwire, taut among pillows. One night strangers stared down through the skylight. Glass divided stage from audience. What we wanted was applause. We showed them everything, and when it rained they never went home again. Our hands signed the story of what it meant to be warm.

4. *Field*

We fled the city at night. I was distracted by your body. My suitcase chipped at the bone in my thigh. Thieves stole doorways and sold them to trees, scrubby oaks that grew up on the street. Beyond the factory we slept in a field littered with swansdown, beer husks, and bees. We fed a fire to blister coyotes. We strung death along on thinness alone.

5. *Museum*

The house that lived beside us is gone, replaced by concrete for a three-car garage. At the estate sale, dealers priced Norwegian dolls. We saved a squirrel from a tangle of chard. Maybe *charm* got confused with *harm* by someone like me or maybe by me. We chipped ice from bootprints to brew into tea. What did we know of strangeness? What might've saved us lived somewhere else. We hung aces from trees axed for newfangled holidays. We knit shadows from snow, leading wolves to false prey.