

Ice sweat. Wolf sweat. Grave sweat. Black was frozen
Violence and violation. Black stained walls, seeped into drawers
To lie in wait forever. Trackless black where the wolf walked,
Bearded reeking black, silhouette of hills not there, of beasts
Clanning moonward, necks fletched like arrows.

I said my mother's secret name; her part of me
Clutched the aconite, scattered it over the bed,
Rose like ether and tried to pass the speed of light.
Deep in my crypt I groped for the incantations, stumbled and skidded
Over roots my father planted. Some trailing tendril snagged.

Dead weed essence opened the flue; friction made a spark.
Still sneezing, I relit the candle, snatched up the wolfsbane
For a funeral pyre, crowned with homemade lamp tables.
Leftover night was stilt-legged shadows on a hearthlit stage,
The usual cast with known names. Tomorrow
I would move back to town and go to work at the Co-op
Making amulets for tourists.
I went to the mirror to see if I was gray.