

## EXORCISM

My mother would have muttered a certain chant all day.  
 Sickly sun plunged pale shafts into the soil, sucking it  
 Dry, giving no warmth, only taking, leaving a swath  
 Of cold-parched earthworms and rock/clay crumbs without  
 Energy to unite. The first wind pried the shutters,  
 Crashed the lamps, spilling all the oil far from my green firewood.  
 Discordant whispers, slaps of chill, wavy scent of animals.  
 Half of me gathered wolfsbane, half swallowed a drugstore ball of  
 sleep,  
 Then centered under the blanket my mother wove and dyed  
 Her mystic patterns in.

Awakened by blackness, darker than sleep, heavier.  
 Than night, I tried to surface, swim up through it  
 Like a cave fish looking inside its head for its lost eyes.  
 Night pushed up from the world's old graves, smelling  
 Of the world's old sins. A wolf night, diseased and howling,  
 A night to grow everything old. I lit a candle and went  
 To the crazed mirror where Pluto's breath waited to finish my tiny  
 flame.

Morpheus fled; his bottle was empty. Pluto ruled rising, smoking and  
 Sinking bottomless. The charred moon reversed, floating me in  
 vertigo,  
 Revealing a death's head like she always said. Dripping