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Carnivores // A Girl's Name // Sonnet for a Cowboy // Pre-Operative

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Carnivores

Before there were men, there were hours
of limbs on linen and imaginary cherry-bombs.
Great marble bodies outstretched in heat. Orchids
tied to bed posts. I was the first infant with an appetite for rats.

A goat's head hangs above my mattress. She wears a prayer over her horns.
I cannot name things I do not love
so she is only a goat. In my sleep I name her after myself. In my sleep
I am only a goat.

Before there were men there were moths. Before all this
Skin. Before there were words for things like this. This body.
A hideous carnation. A marriage of carnivores. Still flesh
cannot thrive without father, so in which organ shall we bury him?

Once I knew a river so shiny I grew gills.
Fish are filthy liars, and with all these bones
I'll never swim. In my sleep I am only a fish. I'll lie
so flat and so still on the water's surface you'll think me a lily pad.

A Girl's Name

Bend—baffle the wings into shapes unclear. Marry the animals that do not caw; falcon. Perhaps eagle. Kitchen table now. A man has your feathers for breakfast. Heirloom the estranged inching up of

thighs. Turn uncles to fruit juice. A knifed citrus lies in the sink and I will play possum licking rind to rim. Offer seconds and or thirds. He only feeds you after he says he's sorry. There is no slur like the

overripe. Pitted. Queer. Remove context and this can be about your stupid boyfriend. Remove context and this body sings female. Remove Remove. I'll They until I vomit in virgo. I'll worm into pinker

apples. I'll bury my zodiac.

MITCHELL ANGELO

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Sonnet for a Cowboy

And I'll carry you on my back to the water.
To frame your figure out West. Let's promise not to
use that word anymore. Let's promise not to touch
anymore. King of the plains. Of things that break,
bend. Play matador on the freeway. Strip like raw
hide. Prey or pray, both end in blood and saliva.
 Arizona in June can make anything less
 painful. I'll scrub your mouth from the tailpipe. And I'll
 carry you on my back to the water.

Pre-Operative

As feral as I feel I know I am docile. Pretty
boy. Honey blood. Let's imagine I am
a raven: a creature winged and worth

writing about. Claim the aggressive and angular. Bury
ovarian in bloom. Pretty boy. Honey blood.
When I fall I will land crooked but I will still be

beautiful. Let's imagine I am something softer.
Let's imagine I am a story in which nobody
dies at the end. Let's imagine I stain

this body in orchids.
Pretty boy. Honey blood. Faggot. Firecrackers. I
am going to need you to cover my ears.

When you say my name for the first time I
want it to scare lesser animals. Perform
predator. I will never die

but if I do remember me as a cowboy. Perform prey.
Your father will see me like he sees any other girl and I will let him. I am
not crying.
When I fall I will land crooked but I will still be beautiful.