

cherry-tipped triptych

This poem can be read four ways: down each of the three columns, and horizontally across all of them.

string me into song – whatever's left
was meant to be loved.
planting a rib in every dream so
the son and daughter splitting cherries
press their faces onto flesh,
mock the leopard. the best predator will
pretend not to want the wounded and
say crippling is a kindness and
come back remember how i loved like
we were more than
mute girls are for a man. their eyes plead:
forget it – grab and fill wherever
there is space. reach for me when
i am not looking, pretend all
memory lingers. say you remember

of the hyena's laughter
one thing remains true: how beautiful
it is soured, like i was,
down the middle – yes, the hounds will
savor every miscarriage. remember: you
pry your ribs open, let them
eat, pray the hunger leaves first.
grow into an open mouth
blood dried on some holy claws
lucky to touch. grief grows wherever
i am still looking; still searching for wherever
the silence is deepest. understand –
i am missing a rib and the
girls fear vacancy, want to hear
how beautifully i was felled.

a confession carved in the sky: i
was tying my future to the moon, its folds,
making promise after promise to
come back for them both. listen:
won't make it. stay beautiful, skin rabbits,
luster in the hollowness. look
how the wolves circle, wanting, sifting what's left
by the wound-winds
whispering:
there is space. but that doesn't mean
a womb is meant to be empty.
grief grows wherever
silence is left untended.
they'll be mothers soon. tell them:
watch how the bite blossoms.