

My Mother's Aubade Says My Father is a Clown

Little as I am, I too, know the devil. He goes into my mother's room with the same rough hands as my father's, the same boots tracking soiled dirt into her room, the same voice that tilts around like a typhoon overlooking a city from a hill. Little as I am, I know the devil's voice. Every night, I imagine the devil straddled over an angel like an emperor leading a war against the dead. Every night my prayer is a mollusk. Every morning, a hull of monologue left on my mother's tongue. Little as I am, I too know the angel. She goes into my father's room with hands that have tended gardens like my mother's, her feet silent as the fall of a feather on snow, her lips parched with a hymn that opens like a bird's wings. Every night, I wait for the devil's boots to knock the tiles of the house as if summoning ghosts, then kneel as my mother's cries run off the walls to my room without her legs. Every night, I sob into the body of an imagined god, hoping my mouth will burst into sunlight, hoping my mother will sing a new aubade while she tends the garden in the morning, when my father is away counting birds with his teeth: clown!