

*Glaucus*

Had I stayed steeped  
in sweet honey—no need  
for herb or mulberries, a mouse

in my palm—my people  
would have savoured  
my mellified limbs. Remarkable

boy, who unbends bones  
in the face of his own burial.  
I saw this, for myself, saw the blood

of dead gladiators spilled  
in the arx of Rome  
to cure all seers born to plebian sons.

I wanted to sleep. The prophet  
had his sword sheathed when  
he coaxed my mouth to his:

my crown bright with bees,  
the shadow in his eyes  
like an owl in flight.

*Orichalcum*

I don't know what will happen to my body  
afterwards, but I want to return  
to the reservoir outside our hometown  
where we caught catfish in the summer,  
my father close to kneeling  
at my feet. The tender press of his thumb  
against the skin beneath my eye, the tear  
there. Clumsy fingers cradling the curve  
of my skull. The catfish thrashed in his free hand  
and I did not realise the reach of the sunlight  
was critical.

The last time I saw him, my father stood  
as he stood in the brook-bed: tall like the Victory  
of Samothrace, ruin braced  
in the shadow of his back. In the water I looked at him  
as we look at the things we've lost:  
the crag of his brow, smile mapped clear  
in the crook of his cheek. Cartographies  
of silence. The way he sank down  
as if struck. The catfish, violent  
with panic in the naked air.  
Alive and gold.