

BLOOD POEM

An old village remedy for a snake bite
is to sever the wings from a chick.
Let desperate veins do what biology has programmed:
Continue.

For centuries, I have loved not with my heart, but the wound in front of it.
For ten years, I have wanted to be the soil in our family cemetery in Tangail.
Have wanted to surround my dadi, hold her until this earth dies too.
Have wanted to be the earth that is so like her,
Bear suffering without a single sound dared out.

Which is to say:
My mother could not lay claim to her mother's land, nor her right to love.
My father is a spinal cord injury we carry, and offer sacrifices to God for.
My eleven-year-old sister has not learned how to ask for love without being called a
whore.

At the end of this Northern winter, I said enough.
The scar tissue on my throat and arms are also my body's attempt to continue.
I think my grandmother has cried enough—
For myself, my daughter, and hers.
Enough,
I think I would like to build a life outside of descendant pain with you.
I think I could make a home here, let the air come in through our punctures.
I think my dadi will forgive me for loving a woman
even if my village does not.
I think if she were allowed, she would have screamed.
Enough,
I think I want to scream too:
Injury, wound, scar tissue
Continue.