

## False Elegy

*a contrapuntal*

in the corner, mother  
stitches eyes onto each scarf,  
azure, bamboo, hazel.  
rocking delicately,  
her bones slipping  
between the wooden slats.  
the sun spreads like a pelt on the carpet.  
she skins the light, efficient.  
wears it as her own.  
this is a survival chore.  
she inverts headlights  
and keeps scars as hostages.  
her fabric grows on the years,  
putting every zodiac to shame  
and forgetting that  
seven marriages and nameless children  
embrace, tighter  
than tassels pushing out  
her daughters' eyes and ears,  
wool hollowing into love letters.  
words into desire.  
the radioactivity between *had* and *has*.  
the light gutters, reminding her neighbors  
how innumerable needles glisten.  
history is an opaque mirror.

peels shadows from the wall and  
christens each her daughter—  
against the fissuring plaster she's  
at a thinning angle,  
like starved fish through a net. she's fallen  
through the blinds.  
in this museum of silent bodies  
mother wears anything dead like a trophy.  
when her guilt stirs she tells herself:  
I have too many limbs and not enough memory.  
into unbearable lenses backlit by grief,  
mother peers, refuses to blink.  
each cuckoo nest destroyed,  
for how light their futures weigh,  
only the stillborn survive.  
wrapped in bathtub curtains  
like a power line around a pine. brighter  
where teeth used to sprout. mother searches  
yet finds her own hands aged.  
backlit ghosts stretching  
desire into negative space after  
mother passes between rooms.  
she is alive. mother admires  
the forgotten and malignant.  
no moon can will her into rebirth.