

The Shrike in the Garden of Machinery

i.)

A lesser god in the kingdom of thorns,
I carried Eve out of storage
one sleepless night, plucked her eyes
from their case, oiled her rusty joints.
By lamplight, I planned to remake her
from memory, a goddess before good and evil,
the original Conversation. All that.

I blew the dust from her hair,
set the torsion of her fingers,
wound the key in her back. Why?
To watch her mouth bloom. So I could,
as a drunken bee, buzz at her lips.
I wanted her to speak to me, undress
with conviction. But she was dead. Folded
into the book of days like a flier for happiness.

ii.)

Isn't this is the way of things? Clematis flowers
sprouting and rotting on the same angry vine. The one thing
you can't have centered in your mind, a splinter.

The clot of traffic, those in the city drowning
on sidewalks. The improvisation of ventricles,
dilated pupils. Hours dreaming the perfect *Thing*.

Portrait of man leaning toward window.
Man waiting for bus. Man wedged in slices of bread.
A refrain: *one day the next day the day before . . .*

It won't be long before the hatchling pecks
through the skin of that building, and that, emerging
wet and weak-necked, sport for a new breed of man.

And still there is the hunt for the Fruit.
The blood of erasure. The Serpent's belly rasping
on steamy roadside grates. Do you know, yet,

the price of knowledge? There in the center of it all,
the spike, the compass lined with bodies.

iii.)

Listen. There are three ways to speak.
One involves hiding in the weeds, covered

with stories. Though you may be tempted to,
don't call me Adam. I've never been here before.

I come out of the redness of earth.
My eyes are on fire.

The solid weight of the Pomegranate is a real thing.
Everything else is a mnemonic for desire.