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Category: Poetry

Poor heart,

it is a Sunday when I watch a woman pant
on screen and say *it felt good*. She is in the dark, in a box
with a view of the snow and the wooden gate

that is always open. It feels like we're alone when she leans in
and whispers *we are in the blind again tonight* but I know about
the man with the camera, the one who is dressed up

like the leaves and waiting patiently in the bushes
for her? For a deer? For someone to come and save him? The program cuts
to commercial and I think that the cameraman is still there now,

waiting with her empty crossbow in his lap as the ad
for prenatal vitamins flashes across the television. He'll be ready
to follow her into the woods when it's time. The camera will list

and he'll say *we're getting close* as we get a glimpse of red
where there shouldn't be. *There's the skin and
the blood* he says, camera shuddering over another branch *Here*

she says. *Where?* he says. *Here* she says. We're looking at the woman now,
as she grips the antlers of a bloodied deer and gasps and says
he's kinda stiff but—he's super stiff but he's here,

here he is and I think that this is the moment
after birth. The deer slick and fresh
and the woman breathing *I can't believe*

that it's him. I see Lavinia here. Her brothers,
the ones who survived, call her *poor
dear* and pet her face. They approach her like

she is a spooked horse and say *is this you?* and then
yes, she is mine and so I start waiting
to be claimed, watch them lead her around

by her phantom tongue, saying *I can
interpret*. Titus closed the night that I saw
my father in it. *I don't die in this one*. he said

and then after a pause added *but
everyone else does*. My mother, who had gone

to the opening, opted to stay home this time because

I still see the blood she said. I sat in the back, next to a woman who told me I looked like her daughter with the freckles and the hair and then she said she'd take me home at the end

of the play if she couldn't have Lavinia. *Don't you just love this?* she said as Lavinia was slowly deconstructed over the course of the hour. *This is Rome*

she said, *she is Rome dismembered* and everyone smiled like it was beautiful. At that moment I could see her holding a crossbow and saying, *we teach*

the children to do this, the cameraman still waiting in the bushes. Maybe she hung the buck on her wall or slept with him in her bed

until her husband got home. Maybe she likes to bake pies in her free time. Plucks off the stems of cherries and lets them marinate in the juices. I don't know

how to bake. I inspect my own body afterward to make sure I didn't lose my tongue in her suffering. All I noticed where her eyes,

open wide enough that I could have mistaken them for her mouth. I kept looking for a tongue to slither out, for teeth to grow where

her eyelashes should have been. *Dear heart* I am only afraid of the parts of my body that I cannot see.