

Blood Song

I think of you first in pieces,
the ones that I can see:

The red dirt caked on the soles of your shoes,
sweat seeping up through the cracked latticework
of your veins, sticky with residual drama.

Your jagged jaw,
cracked from chewing bits of limestone,
from your climb (tooth and nail) out of some deep tomb.

Your hair, shaggy and oddly-colored,
dark underneath like pine boughs
and light on top, like snow coating needles.

Limbs, hardened into slick rock
from years of jumping
over porch swings and gaping canyons.

What would you tell me, if you could?

Maybe secrets about your earliest memories,
ones that haunted you at night
in the form of petrified grins where you lived:
those of fat, threatening coyote prints in the snow.

Or that first crucial moment of deep pain you felt,
when a bit of sun swept up over the hills,
and a sweet tobacco taste lingered stubbornly
on your lips and fingernails.

Of course, these are things I don't know,
things I've invented in the years
since that first time
I felt the roughness of your palm
and saw the trace of wet handprint on your jeans:
love.

I piece together my own invention of who you are,
have been and might be, from what I can see, because

blood songs
can't be shared.