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The Solstice (on self-mutilation)

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The Solstice (on self-mutilation)

Your shame was still warm
when I found you,
steam still rising from between
your flayed breasts proudly,
like a decoration of war:
A badge of lace and bone
and from behind it you stared
that same membrane stare
radiating from your China-cup eyes
spackled with tea leaves—
decoding no futures,
spider-legging only.
The present, the tragedy,
this mid-winter filth
of the mildew lining the shoulders
of roads.
From your crumpled wings,
your river teeth begged me
to understand your muted truth—
collected and shivering,
to understand that
this is the sound that snow makes.

Garret Wenger