WIDOW UNDER A NEW MOON

1.

Evening has overtaken the parlor. I cannot see my mother sitting on the porch, but I know exactly how she holds herself, knees tight against her chest.

2.

There is the story of my father and me playing catch in the street. We would throw high-flies to each other as dusk came on. In time, we would not see the ball until an instant from our faces, when all luck was reflex.

Once-mightily-he threw the ball to the moonless night, and I moved closer to him, gauging its point of return. There was a long pause, then her voice.

3.

I get up from the rocker and go to the door. I ask her if she'll be coming in soon, would she like a cup of tea.
She does not answer
but asks
if we ever found the ball
that night. I tell her
what I have repeated
a thousand times. No,
it must have landed
in a sewer or an open drain.

4.

At this moment I am slicing lemon for her tea. I can hear her setting china on the table, the delicate clicks freezing me in my place. Soon she will take a single taste of pie, a few inaudible sips of chamomile. Carefully, she will avoid my eyes. Then, in strained monotone, she will claim that he never believed the ball landed in the sewer, that he believed it was a sign. I will place my cup on the saucer and inhale the sweet steam. And tonight, finally, perhaps I will say yes, he might have been right

and she will be gone.