

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.