

[*Cemetery Ink*](#) by Mihaela Moscaliuc (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021)

Mosquito

for Kiernan

She will absorb blood
three times her body weight
then land on the nearest post
to extract and evacuate its water.
Limber enough now for flight,
she will rush the cold-pressed juice
to nourish her eggs.

Forget the origin of blood.
Focus on the mother,

the serrated blades and syringes
working concertedly
like a team of eminent surgeons,
then the throb of panic
when she senses she won't make it home.
Intense labor and devotion
undone with a casual swat—

When I took you to pick a dress
but wouldn't buy you accessories
for the wedding, your dad's and mine,
you blurted, "You're not even my mother."
You were a child and I'd just stopped
being one. Vacuumed, I'd re-emerged
as mother without child.

Forget the origin of blood.
I wouldn't have sacrificed
nearly as much as a mosquito
to nourish eggs, see them hatch—I didn't
—but would have sharpened, *would*
sharpen every blade needed
to protect you.

Self as Goat in Tree

Nine goats scamper up
the gnarly argan tree and graze it clean.
They ingest the wrinkled fruit whole,
though it's the bitter pulp alone
that rouses their appetite for more.
Sated, they stare at the horizon
till branches wear thin and fall.
Farmers harvest goats' droppings
to extract the pit rich in kernels of oil.
Haven't you too wished yourself a goat
perched punch-drunk on a linden tree,
blasé about the gold you might shit,
how it might serve both hunger and greed.
Haven't you goaded yourself
to balance just a bit longer,
chew on some fugitive scents,
forget what a ditch the earth is.