

To the Muse

*But that is the one faith
I share with you: I believe
my inspiration is marvelous.*
—MARY SHELLEY, *Dr. Frankenstein*

Scratch of a killer with the sticky eyes of Dog:
My sweetheart lugged it to my window and said,
“Good-bye.” (And does my conception of every woman
as a widow seem offensive?) Good-bye.

I’m excited. At times like this, even love
is excited. My eyes shake like mice
in their incandescent caves. Still, the same yowls;
the same weeping in the street; shriek of the knife-

grinder’s parrot on its perch. Get back! This poem will
kill you, this poem, this annihilating cartridge,
but that’s a lie. The murderous stanza packs nothing
but rodents, victims backed into corners where even

cherry-sweet children sprout claws. My Muse, you’re
my Mommy, you snout in the curtains, Wolf with the sensual
teeth of a woman, dreaming this neck
in the shadows.

STEPHEN MASSIMILLA