

## In the Death House (Ten of Goya's "Black Paintings")

### **Atropos (The Fates)**

At this hour  
and for this reason  
and by this design.  
What was it that  
made me think  
I could do this?

### **Two Old Men**

One to decree it  
and another to make sure it happens.  
Sometimes afterward they look down  
as if they no longer understand  
their own hands

### **Two Old Men Eating Soup**

Add soup in the evenings at home  
with their families    wives knowing not to ask  
about their day    Just turning back  
to the stove    Add soup  
so they have something  
to say yes to

### **Fight with Cudgels**

Some fight it by saying something at the end  
Some fight it by saying nothing  
Some fight it by praying  
Some fight it by spitting  
Some fight it by wearing boots  
Some fight it by giving their boots away

**Witches' Sabbath**

When shall we three meet again?  
Not here, not today. Day of rest, day of  
mercy, day of we will not do it this time,  
day of we can't stop thinking about it,  
day of it wasn't me, day of I was just doing my job,  
day of someone had to, day of not anymore.  
When I close my eyes I see their faces  
by my bed, watching me try to dream

**Men Reading**

The others reading magazines  
in their cells    eyes fixed on the pages  
    not thinking about who goes next

**Women Laughing**

In the visiting room  
the aunt, the grandmother, the niece  
who will end up mute years later  
and not remember why.  
Someone says something funny  
and for a minute they are laughing—  
    They break open and glass spills out

**The Dog**

went at the leaves, regardless,  
in a frenzy of delight,  
didn't see the anguish on the people's faces,  
didn't know what the trouble was  
with the suddenly beautiful day

**Saturn Devouring His Son**

What was it about this particular love  
that made him turn it into prey?  
What was it that made him so sure that  
he couldn't stand to see it on the outside?

**Fantastic Vision**

I imagine them in long robes  
I imagine them back from the underworld  
I imagine them forsaken  
I imagine them standing in a circle  
I imagine them drinking coffee with me the next morning  
I imagine all of us flying through the air  
I imagine them forgiving me  
I imagine them washing themselves, taking out the garbage,  
putting their feet up, opening a beer—  
I imagine myself before I knew anyone like them,  
running through summers and falling in the soft and easy dirt.