

K.A. HAYS

Vespers, Trento

We hold rosaries
and pray aloud, *Santa Maria*....
We who kneel draw close to the dead.
Not to God. The dead are the ones
we long for, the bodies themselves,
which ate and yelled and stumbled,
grew hair, and were possibly soulless—

But the body is not my country,
the soul boasts. And the mind is not.
It says so, crouching among the bones,
because the body doesn't need it.
The soul sees itself: small as any bead
formed by fingers, rolled along the palm.
It is, at best, an idea or prayer the body has—.