

JENNIFER MILITELLO

*A Dictionary of Wooing and Deception in the Voice  
of the Sociopath*

It takes so long to go bad, here in this glad world.  
If I loom, what I hate holes up inside me.  
I feel where it is broken like a rib. I feel

where it fibs in order to be related.  
It follows me home, nose to the scent.  
The cat in me is scratching at my tongue.

Let in, it will win you over. Let go and you will  
feel yourself grow older as the knives in me  
describe the knives you know.

Godless, I am most real. Healed, I am  
most ill. Filth is my most honest hour.  
The eye of me contains all I am loosely.

The eye of me is hardly mine. It is  
a gallery for the overripe. It invents  
our lives from five dimensions. Unlike the heart,

its crowbars pry. I am not I.  
I barter with the periphery. It is the puncture  
in me that mouths the translation.

What I read in the entrails. What the blood reds  
become. My eye contains an afternoon.  
Its dry mouth made of autumn. I lick at

my wounds. I never cool. I have become  
the evidence, I have become degrees. The teams  
of horses set loose are my silence. What tension

threads itself like nectar from my wounds.  
A man is a house of cards. A man  
like a jar, filling slowly. Like wire, like

a vial of warmth. My blood has been sleet  
the way it falls in winter. Onto the canvas  
as two mediums at once.