

Brianna Low

Communion

After the cats are sacked and drowned
in the dirty river, you think
of their blindness, how they pushed
their heads weakly against your palm.
You do not want to be the kind of man
who looks at an animal and thinks
only of slaughter. Every winter the priest
drives to the farm where he hands you
a small bag of white wafers.
At night you walk to the barn
where the cows stand huddled in their stalls.
You offer them the host, your hands cupped
to their mouths in communion.
Always, there are those who will not take it,
who just lean against you in the dark.
For them you break the bread, mix it with the silage,
leave them breathing out into the cold.
You remember how the neighbor's dog
broke into the feed yard, how it set the steer to panic.
How to calm them they were led in slow circles around the barn.

