Primer

The girl reads neighbourhoods of dog, cat, sister, brother, mother, father houses lit with yellow sunshine and once upon a time glass slippers, long-toothed wolves.

The girl does not know yet
the broken world,
that there will be pages for consequence, coercion, fraudulence.

Outside her room the sky is an X-Ray pinned to light armies of birds lifting into skeletal shadows. Softness vanishes in the city deformed by contagion, fear, vanity.

News stories convulse
palsied in the laws of speech.
Planes pass over the skyline.
Traffic lights change voltage.
Damage is quiet
oil slick pools in city parkades
fissured winds, smudge of newsprint.

Elegant hands read the book of lost entries trace the red glares of exit signs, writing on tenement walls the veined arms of junkies.

The girl reads her picture books.
A child's garden of verses.
The alphabet sifts into her ribcage
opens her to stars, grass, abcs
whole sentences whispering dark.

In the open doorway something cold and distant even adult hands are small against it.

The book left on the lectern brittle yellow pages without context lexicons of disclosure soft imprisonment.

The girl does not know yet how words will hiss and tremble on fuller pages imagined wilderness, insomniac's tale, seductions, remembrances and forgettings, child's face pressed against shattered window, wrecked lullaby, fiercely beautiful derailment, murderer's knife, deep song of mouth unnaming the known.

My hands close on empty testimonies until I find that girl—a pocket of held light ripped corner of one illuminated manuscript.

In my dreams I see her the pages blowing with dormant

terror

as she gathers moon and sky in her small hands like a mouth lovely language that has no word for *harm*.