

REPRODUCTION AND BIRTH IN BEAUTY

I don't feel
good after
I write.

It's something
like the pain
of childbirth-

not that I'd know,
but just to say,
it's embodied, physical,

as if every organ
is twisted and
squeezed

to produce a
single
word-

and the nagging
anxieties about the fate
of your offspring,

and the lingering
exhaustion from an all-consuming
obsession and mania.

The poet often begins
by crediting their goddess
or muse,

so to say
this was not their own act,
but the expression that follows

from being overtaken
by an enlightened,
external force.

But my invocations
are only ever to a
demon,

to whom I submit
and place all my trust,
signing away my fragile soul-

and only much later will I know
whether it was,
in fact,

an angel
disguised as
Beelzebub.

Though more often than not,
a lonesome gondola
to purgatory.