Hermetic

Demons bring adultery, murder, violence to one's father, sacrilege, ungodliness, strangling, suicide from a cliff and all such other demonic actions.

—The Way of Hermes

A demon breathed into my dreaming mouth
(I promised I'd tell you everything)
a barnful of owls.

In their beaks black coils of telephone wires,
coops and coils,
and I could hear every last conversation on earth.

No one listened to each other, only talked
as if they were drowning
and had to buoy themselves up with words.

The owls did not look particularly disturbed,
or regal.
They were, perhaps, wicked,
as they mocked my own abeyance, cold-boned, featherless,
nothing remarkable
to hold under my tongue.

My 31 teeth (I said I would be truthful)
huddled in the wing-flung air, and the demon
hummed through the spaces
between each tooth, fermata
that turned my blood to marl.
There is the barn, and there is the gallery of bodies
buried beneath it. There is the gun rack I've never seen,
but know exists, because I built it last night.
I placed my underwear over it to dry,

and was proud of my craftiness.
I knelt in front of myself in the mirror
and was proud to believe in no other.
The demon asked me (don’t turn away now)  
what body part I’d give up  
not to have let him have me. I told him  
how soft the undersides of your wrists were. I told him what I told you—I’ll be steadfast  
while sleeping. I’ll sleep until I’m true.