

“Self Portrait” Prompt

Prompt:

—Read Aracelis Girmay’s [*Kingdom Animalia*](#)

—And particularly, “Self-Portrait as the Snail”

Self-Portrait as the Snail

Thirty-one.

For years, I am the snail
trailing my thought behind me:
a red horse, or carpet. Royal.
The things I’ve marked & been marked by,
blood falling behind me like a stranger’s tail.
Resourceful Gretel who, in eating all the bread,
lets her blood down to mark the way back home!

Like this:

I carry my meat over the earth’s lion mouth
& slowly feed my bodies to the dirt.

Discuss:

—What is the fairy tale being discussed

—what does it do, to know that she dropped her blood (instead of?), how does that change the story

—What kind of Gretel “lets her blood down”?

—Who is the snail, why does the snail appear here?

Prompt:

— Think of a fairy tale or myth that you can remember very well, that you don’t have to look up

— Alter one detail in your fairy tale

— Become the object transformed by your alteration