

# Untitled

BY CHARLES D. COPELAND

Your mother reaches into her throat and pulls her body inside-out, baring the intestinal villi that teem like worms.

Your mother stands in front of the ocean on a full-moon-night as the waves crash on and on against the shore.  
Your mother stares out over a winter plain thick with wolves and tightens her headscarf.

Your mother boards a ship for America and works as a servant girl for a rich family and starves,

She learns to steal bread and the bread brings the color back to her cheeks and one day she marries and there is another generation of mothers.

Your mother paints. She paints the seaside in watercolor and she paints three cows in a mass of thick brown oil,

She paints an old woman peeling carrots and she paints a vase of flowers and she paints a nude.

Your mother wakes up in a ditch and crawls out of it before the dawn light breaks through the blue spruce.

Your mother's car hits the black ice and she spins, smashing into the boulders that circle the cemetery hill.

Your mother wakes up alive in a parking lot. Your mother wakes up dead on the beach in Normandy, frozen upright in a winter forest, waiting for the mortars to break over the hedgerows.

Your mother watches her father feed the squealing pile of rats that gather at the threshold of the front door as fleas accumulate in all the dark corners of the house.

Your mother pours out salad dressing at a family reunion in a restaurant by the river as you eat your cornbread.

Your mother goes a month without sleeping as her eyes crystallize like a chrysanthemum of dried blood, a chrysanthemum of chalk.

Your mother gets out of bed when she hears a sound at the end of the hall, someone running through the room, something falling off a shelf, a sound that passes. Everything is alright.