

How to Make Beef Stew

On a cold February night
 when the sky halfway across
the world explodes with red
 old hate, sauté onions
in olive oil in the bottom
 of a Dutch oven heavy
as a kettlebell for squatting
 your quads into sturdy
weapons. Add a quarter
 bulb of minced garlic
and cook until it smells like
 a good vampire repellent.
Brown the blood-red
 cubes of sacrifice
and sprinkle a little flour,
 salt, and pepper on top
so it covers the dead
 animal a little like snow
can coat a body frozen
 alone on the ground
with its guts bursting
 through a new opening
it never wanted. Squeeze
 the last of the tomato paste
tube into the pot, stir
 and be grateful. Add the broth
and potatoes and carrots
 and a small flood of red
cheap wine and any herbs left
 unrotten in the back corner
of the fetid crisper drawer
 and simmer for hours
until your house smells like
 a home—like the children
you won't have, won't bring into this
 slaughter sky, would be lucky
and warmed through to
 their fragile bones.

