

What is real?

I told you about my dog
 being run over
 and you were comforting.
 I even told you
 that I took a piece of his skin
 and hung it on my wall.
 You said you could try to
 lay my dog to rest,
 freeing his spirit
 with an old Indian song.
 You were kind,
 understanding.
 But
 there was no dead dog,
 and
 I couldn't lie anymore
 because you believed me.
 So
 I told you what was real.
 There was a wounded dog.
 I cut off his ears,
 slicing so cleanly
 that
 when he shook his head
 blood
 splattered the white walls.
 I was sent away
 a crazy kid.
 But I told you
 because you believed me.
 It was the grownups
 who hurt me, and in turn
 I cut up their dog.

Do you know what it feels
 like
 when your very own mother
 and
 a man you call father
 do those things to you?
 My mother ate pills
 like candy.
 Smiling one minute,
 screaming crazy the next.
 My stepfather
 stuck needles into everything
 but his head.
 Together
 they cut behind my knees
 with a kitchen knife
 because I lied
 about stealing from a store.
 Now I can't wear shorts
 in the summer
 because
 the scars are so deep
 I'm afraid someone will ask
 why?
 They burned my thumb
 because
 I sucked it.
 They made me act
 like someone their age.
 Sexual stuff.
 I can't talk about it,
 but you know, don't you.
 If only it hadn't been
 my very own mother,
 but it was.

Jean Meyer