

NEW WORLD GHOST STORY

Here lies the house
that she traded for blood,

that the siblings still
fight over—the domicile that

repels division.

Of course, it would be
filled with white

ghosts inside and white
ghosts outside, calling

about the white fence around the
way of telling you this is about

the time ông ngoại laughed
in the face of a ghost

that pressed nightly on his
chest, he was so full up

of it :: terror repeated long

enough becomes pure

comedy and what else can you
do but laugh and laugh

about the time the nuns on
bicycles shouted slurs

against the new neighbors,
taking. Or the time that

I wandered into the backyard
and finally knew a dead thing.

Or how ông ngoại, out of
nostalgia and spite,

snapped the neck
of the chicken he kept

right there on the front lawn
for our supper without

pause, luck unraveling
in his raspy hands.

On the sidewalk, a pair of

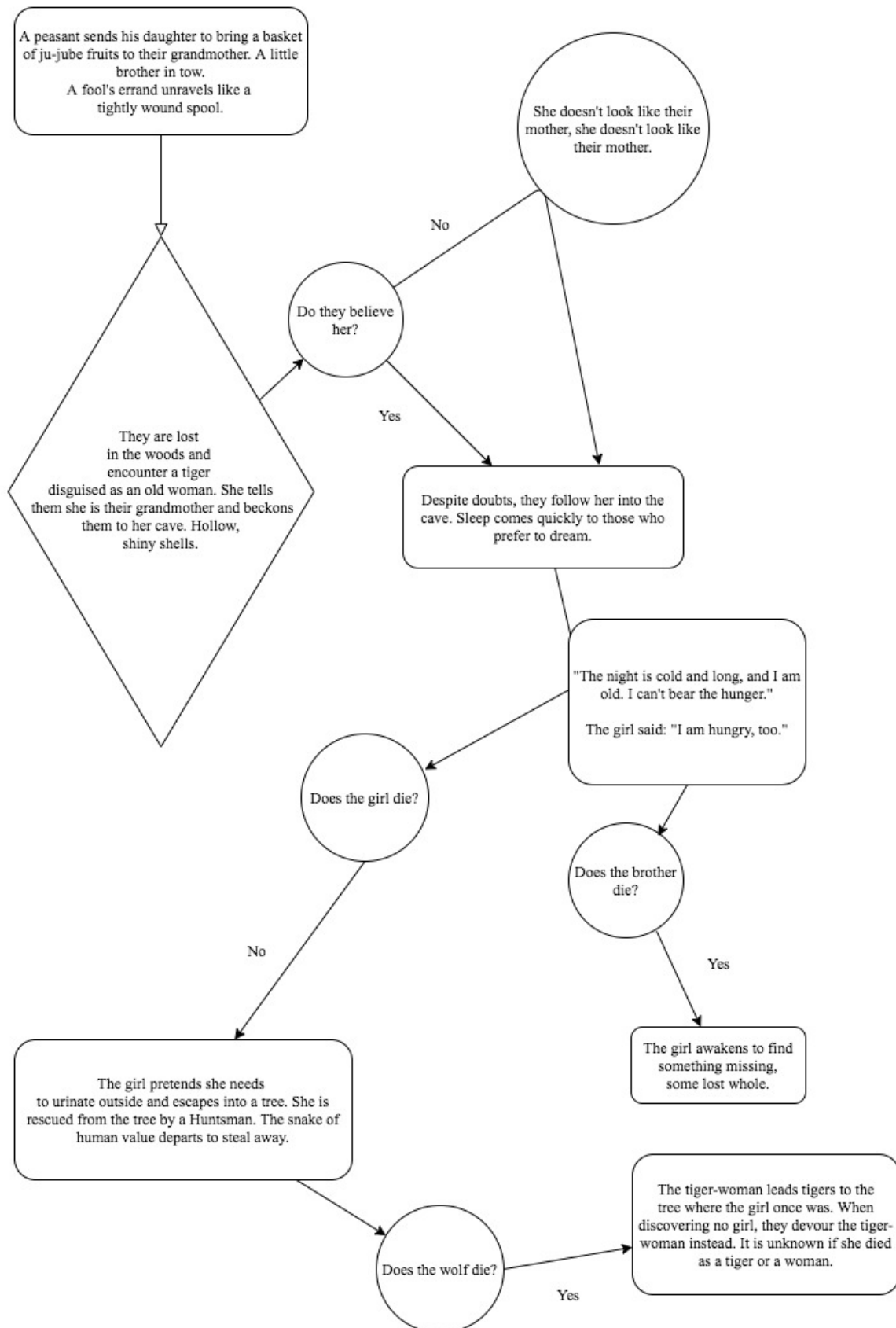
mistaken ghosts
mounted their bloodied bicycles,

mouthed *oh*

oh

oh

and fled.



CATALOGUE OF RANDOM ACTS OF VIOLENCE II

Where are you from?
Where is your mother from?
But can you speak it?
Can she speak it?
How long has she been speaking it?
Are you better at reading or speaking it?
Do you have family there?
Do you think you look like her?
Where are they?
And where are they now?
Do people tell you you look like her?
Can you understand her?
Can she understand me?
Do you have another name?
Do you cook it?
When did she?
Why didn't she?
Why can?
Why cannot?



LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD
after the Brothers Grimm

Half a league from the village
Little Red entered the wolf

what a wicked creature
to have something good

pretty flowers growing everywhere
and deeper and deeper into the house

the wolf lifted the latch
without saying a word

she could carry no more
the stones were so heavy

what big ears
what large hands
the wolf's skin

revived Little Red
to run into the wood
to guard her way

the house was a great stone
the child began to slip



THE WOODS

Name mame mama
mama maim name

mama mama

O O O if you knew how much

woods I own how much now
woods I know you might

turn straight into stone—
astounded, your face

like love folding me back down

into a bed of incomplete flowers

THE LIGHT OF THE MOON

*I danced with a gal with a hole in her stocking
And her knees was a-knockin' and her shoes was a-rockin'
I danced with a gal with a hole in her stocking
And we danced by the light of the moon*

Years after the first wolf and the
discharge of painted visions,

Red sought another errand after
the collapse of her country's face.

What would she give, a mouth
asked, to secure safe passage?

Decorations on decoration.

They would empty the basket
in the light of the moon, and

Red would address the
lessons of a former silhouette:
if something must be taken
away, continually, one must
learn to cut out its value.

She would find another way
through the deep wood with
a set of plastic furs.

That night, she would
slip the four-starred fish
away from its fate, would
muddy honors across flesh ::

tasting nothing, but soot and
and salt and unwashed hair.