



Janet Mauney

The Night You Gave Me Your Heart

After dinner, I was surprised when
you offered me your heart and
laid it out on the table between
us, a rare delicacy to be probed and
explored. It was larger than I had
thought, not much blood, with all
the attachments in place although
the right descending artery
was a little narrow.

Gently, I picked it up with its
roots dangling and closed my
eyes, feeling the strong beat of
the atrial and ventricular muscles.
Turning it over, I ran my hand
over the epicardia. Smooth
and tight as a ripe fruit,
only one large soft spot.
No breaks or holes. How I
longed to look inside. What
would I find? Some old scars.
Secret wishes. A Cathy or a
Judy. Perhaps even a Delilah.

I carried your heart to the
cutting board and picked up a
knife. What are you doing,
you said and took your heart back.
I just wanted to make a peephole,
round as a marble. Nothing dangerous.
That would be too painful,
you said and locked it up tight
behind the bars of your chest.

We had dessert then, a fiery
Cherries Jubilee over ice cream
and angel food cake, and later,

coffee with rum in it. Then you
said, Now it's your turn.

