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*The streets are walked by she who fully backwards walks them empty*

Long ago there stood in the midst of a country covered with lakes

a vast stretch of moorland, with worn covers possibly bent

pages stained on edges foxed, yet all text remained visible

Tales with torn ends followed, where falsehoods

became persons. When entirely spent we put our hands

in our sockets and continued following what we imagined

were the steps you might have taken. I had no intention

of continuing to write elegies yet every night I dreamed

of finding you inside a locket circumscribed by this wood

An empty envelope, even when cast in gold is not the threshold

Two drops of water, a cloak and mussel shell are not the sea

or the sack bigger than oneself being dragged into dark

The sheets are stalked by she who fully lacks words, and locks them credibly

*When love can't be composed any better, then love can't be postponed any longer*

Honey lay ankle deep in the valley and knee deep in the hills

In the Fall that never happened mittens fell from trees

We hung our shoes in the eaves, strung spikes from eyes

At the window you thanked me for swallowing pennies

Though I clung to your form by night, by day your voice

thrown sweltering into a pot, afflicted me

Drops of water on my page bled and tore

The sky was flat grey and trees all in flame

During these times we carried our heads about in hat boxes

and put them on only when absolutely necessary

Silence was shackled sleep in the valley and plea swept in chills

We had no need for caps or courtesy, as all thought was kept warmly stowed

When love can't be dethroned any better than love can't be disarmed any longer

*Time's retraction brings the failure of action*

Do you see this girl? I wish to adopt her as my daughter

Make me a copy we can send to her village

Which is worse— to ask for help or to drown?

I signaled to my love through a window locked against fathoms

He saw me but waved me away. With the bone

of a finger I was transcribed into rain, imprecise scribbles

sorrier than verbiage, easier than spent. He was lecturing

to a rabbit: 'Easy to send out a line, impossible to retrieve it'

Do you see this pearl? I wish to drink her like water

I cannot tell you whether the journey is long or short

When asked to alter silence we broke into song

Like the contusion which is violet ushering dusk

Sublime contraction brings derailed subtraction

*The phrase, this stream, among wolves*

The mussel shell and the fish scales were put back in the box

and the girls went in

The lettering was smaller than I thought

I did not rise to meet him, nor did I

greet the red scarf around his neck

He had used himself up

You could tell as the color left his eyes

then hands then mouth

I danced with every version of myself unpardoned

by the satin conversation of your lips

I gave myself to an engraved cover, opening doors

We were a solid wreck darning the word 'darling'

this phase, this seam against resolve

*The blushing sun has set*

He took up a handful of clay and made a doll as large as strife

The book was very tall, taller by one head, with

fingers peeking over the edge and mead streaming out

Like our walks, when alone, where dreams disturb neighbors

To follow where nothing leads is to emerge from the lake

with no bed, a snapping turtle with leeches on its back

on the way to the opera knowing sound from inside

Earlier was inward and afterward a message

bathed in blue light. A millet seed dropped into the sea

grown before eyes, cut by an invisible hand, made into cake

Lists were erupting from paper, mouths, lasers

Streets disappeared, wombs lurched at a glance

the crushing one has sent

*Let us go then you and I, in pajamas through the sky*

The conductor's hands waved ice

When the violinist stomped was that scored?

My hair was very long

When I stood it reached the floor

When I sat it reached the eaves

Your tale is as long as your tongue may fly

Wait— let me rearrange your decades

Will you help me to reverse my premises?

And so we undid the clock

and so we unhooked your cloak, and lay it on the ground

amid roving dapples and flecks of velvet light

we may transform ourselves into balls of fire

Let us flow then you and I, through docudramas in the 'why'

*Bird of daughters, bird flying from the forks*

The soloist is the main character. She offers  
a reprieve from language composed at high elevations  
No two shrouds are the same and yet we recognize  
clouds as moments without melody, scalloped arks  
I press each word to your lip with my own (it's called kissing)  
an excursion to the woods after a rain, every leaf reverberant  
Not only perplexity traced on paper, but sound  
complete and unabridged, including original illustrations  
desks scratching and writhing, answers blue and bodily  
whip, rod and verbena. *Werb*, turn or bend, branches  
of an echo. How to leave marks in a listener's mind  
blank words five times fast. How to live in unison; how to coax  
unheard of waters, slurred untying of harps