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Pilgrims

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AUGUST AFTERNOONS

One is led, in a darkness of oak
through the virgin small ears of wheat
to the bottom of a stone ladder

Kali

known as the devourer is braced above
with obsidian knives peeling
the smaller feathers off her arms and legs

this is the arrangement, prisoners
and those born in the first harvest
are allowed to sustain everything, hear
the rain now more furious
than her dry explosion of milkweed

one wants the seeds of the great Babylonian grain
god to come swelling out her eyes
to discover the purple curls of her bright
finger beads becoming more purple
Kali refills the land
the prophecy is lopped into a long bowl

PILGRIMS

The cripple wears a bell
a step behind his mother

her eyes shut on the snow

she walks only on the toes of her left foot
because it is bare he is staring at something
about to crash through the window above them
It is a window with five stars hooked
on an anchor his hands slide down the soaked wood

she is determined there will be no sound
that whatever it is pass unnoticed