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The Sound of a Silk Dress

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The Sound of a Silk Dress / Dave Smith

The man with no name came,
his pants thick to the knees
with burs, and he cradled
his face in his knuckles

and cried, if you can call
silence crying. One of us
spoke of dust on the sills
of the man's house. The lid

of light lowered, flattened,
birds darted. Across fields
the flicker of lamps began
but we stayed speaking softly

of the yellow bones of friends
in the dark, their suppers,
an empty chair. The man
backed into his steps, turned

from us, for we were not home,
kicked the dirt and then was
gone. Later we tried to name
the luck we had all had

in youth, dogs, fields, love.
I remember him now walking
out of our bodies to touch
the dress with no music

in that box. I knew I would
follow him in my own time,
the dress was electric, his
knuckles white in that moon.

At the door when he comes
out of glowing stars, I say
Lord I don't know what to do
but go home, wash, and wait.