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On the Back of the Note I Left You When I Went out I Have Written This Ode

Christopher Howell

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On the Back of the Note I Left You
When I Went Out I Have Written
This Ode · *Christopher Howell*

Scraping my shoes
on the last stars just now
as I came in
I saw your body shimmer
as the soul slipped out
tipping its hat to the air
and the imperturbable
room. Darkly in lamplight
your wondrous hair calls out
to Russian peasants
dreaming in your coded
blood. The next room
or century is where I speak
from. But they are only time
and space, nothing
to the ocean your sleeping
wings across, seeking the deep
ancestral roads of Anapola
for the exact cheek bones
and broken smile
your Zadie brought
in that grey ship rocking.
Did he look at the moon
the whole way
as you do when we travel
through the night? As you do
now somewhere over darkened water?
It is such damaged truth
the heart requests.
And so I send this on
by some messenger who knows
where best moonlight
is burning from a Russian face.
May it find you as voice finds flesh
in every season: luminous
and new, homing
down the flyways of the blood.