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Settling into the A-Frame

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Settling into the A-Frame · *Madeline DeFrees*

In this loft the red portiere
opens on sleep and the sleepwalker,
country of clay pigeons tossed in air, the wished-for
shuttle weaving through flat haze.
Behind the yellow door
light puts on gauze and bangles, arranges
limbs of an odalisque in storm windows.

Caterpillars
intent in far trees, wind themselves in clouds
of unknowing. The Wandering Jew screens a bare window,
rooms all angles and bars. To live at such a pitch
under the eaves, morning
turned away in a flutter of branches, the prospect
green as my early years on the other
side of the continent.

Doors breaking the still white:
slashes of color. Behind the jade
green water bends to my least command, takes the shape
of my body. Wound in the arms of everything
left in a sojourn among mountains, I view the body
of this day, this three-sided
dwelling on upright beams, the horizontal aim

that lifts me up and brings me down. The air fills
with nails, harsh drive of crows. The left-
armed cross outreaches its partner, two sides of a triangle
built of ceiling and shadow. This woman I walk through
on my own, never sure of the switch, inserts
a nail in the wall
outlet. I leave with my hands on fire.