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On Translation

Marianne Boruch

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On Translation · *Marianne Boruch*

The hungry man in the blue hat
has borrowed his ghost, no
the ghost in the borrowed hat just
sat down to dinner. The dinner's really something
is, all extraordinary, it is, more than that, well
a secret, shhhh! A lobster who did not die of fright.
"So this one went willingly?" says the ghost
with the borrowed tongue. "Oh yes oh yes oh yes"
chants a chorus of waiters pressing a bright fork
into his hand. "Ah, such a big one," thinks the man,
"and such a little fork!" He is eating now,
reading, between bites, a small round book.
Perhaps the ghost of a book. It is hard to describe,
but suddenly, as I watch, I see
the ghost of a lobster beneath the blue hat
rising, rising on a wave
which curls into itself. Something happens
in that haunted mouth.