To a Friend Going Blind

Jorie Graham

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Today, because I couldn't find the shortcut through,
I had to walk this town’s entire inner
perimeter to find
where the medieval walls break open
in an eighteenth century
arch. The yellow valley flickered on and off
through cracks and the gaps
for guns. Bruna is teaching me
to cut a pattern.
Saturdays we buy the cloth.
She takes it in her hands
like a good idea, feeling
for texture, grain, the built-in
limits. It's only as an afterthought she asks
and do you think it's beautiful?
Her measuring tapes hang down, corn-blond and endless,
from her neck.
When I look at her
I think Rapunzel,
how one could climb that measuring,
that love. But I was saying,
I wandered all along the street that hugs the walls,
a needle floating
on its cloth. Once
I shut my eyes and felt my way
along the stone. Outside
is the cash crop, sunflowers, as far as one can see. Listen,
the wind rattles in them,
a loose worship
seeking an object
an interruption. Sara,
the walls are beautiful. They block the view.
And it feels rich to be
inside their grasp.
When Bruna finishes her dress it is the shape of what has come to rescue her. She puts it on.