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From Black Series

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But she will turn nothing to stone. I have my Hawkweed in a bowl,
orange-red as Chinese silk, a fiery bridal veil, a vow.
It is this my eyes will close on.

FROM BLACK SERIES

Night ministers to the trees—no, it just comes on
like a TV set does, but softer, and more slowly,
layering grays upon grays; some slick, some rough and scumbled.
The hem of things is loosening, the bird-cries disappearing.
Even the earth seems unrooted, unresolved.

Somewhere decisions are clamoring to be made. I know this.
But I'm watching the black-on-gray of trees and sky,
that agile blurring, as when the mind slips free of doctrine,
feeling within itself the confused intelligent wing-beats of the hidden.
Somewhere in rooms and on terminals the speculative frenzy
of the market has stopped until tomorrow, shares have risen
or fallen, trading has been *brisk* or *slow*. Soon the quicknesses will sew

themselves back into my skin, the daily grids and patternings sewn back.
But for now I can feel this Pause of Dark—and how it wraps me—
its scales not weighted with the heaviness
of measurement or calculation.
The houselights on the mountain carve out of the night
their small, insistent harbors.

Goldfinch, Evening Grossbeak, where have you gone to
now that your absence sweeps the sky? What keeps custody of you
in these hours before morning?
Your absence is a place I wander through,

here where *all thought is afterthought*,
this earth unmoored, there are no moorings here—
and then, come morning, the newspapers will be dropped off
with their headlines and their captioned photos, and then, and then,
the minutes will fill with things, my eyes in sunlight

becoming again like an airplane's black box meticulously recording.
And I will see on the hill the crevices where footholds tighten,
and the smoothnesses where slippage threatens.
And then a steepness breeding lilies, milkweed, thorns.

AT NIAUX

Fists and wounds of light, battlements and ranks of light: we
leave them outside, wander in with flashlights
whose beams flirt and shiver on the walls. Here is the
clay floor, slippery, soft, and here
the anxious dark I carry within me as I walk.

The ground bulges as if it did not want
our footsteps. The drawings of animals are almost a mile
in. Each morning my dreams disintegrate, coming unstuck
from their sleepy frame, the canvas in flame,
or a film's edges melting and curling as it burns,

but these walls dream their animals unceasingly,
the chargers, the mothering, the injured ones, the gravid,
the gaping nest of each eye fiercely open.

We walk on and on.

These flowers are like the pleasures of the world,
but there are no flowers here. The walls loom up,

half flash-lit, half in dark. *A headless man? The garments
of Posthumous? This is his hand, his foot mercurial,
his mortal thigh. . . .*

The walls conspire, make up stories. No. They're murder
without plot, betrayal without motive, the aura of crime
but not the crime, the humming of it like shockwaves
through water.

Who walks ahead of me? And stops, as if by a river
whose surface holds the stark