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Journal

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Journal

26jano1, *flying west*

yesterday a year ago was the last time my sister spoke to her
children

five-days-before-they-died

isn't it homeopathic, the ocean now?
dilutions of her first daughter diluted
into not-penance-but-ocean-now

the could-have-beens!
the sparkling house

28jano1, *my sister's house, Seattle*

so what are we to make of the whole disappearing?

but there are still the girls' books and notes and keychains lit
with dust,
and dust is just skin so I wonder—
are they here in the dust

in the paper this morning—
a partial list of what-was-found
bandana-slash-camera-slash-jeans

in two days they're burying all unidentified remains
into a common grave

my mother is trying to paint again

the bird outside the window doesn't take off but gets caught in
the branches
and the sky's all tangled, too, reluctant to get bright

even claire's hair is getting light

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29jano1, *beach house, morning on Vashon Island*

what but the water being high
and it being colder than usual, earlier than usual
and my sister waking in the dark
and there being no clock so what time it is she only wonders
not moving because not wanting to move
though outside the water is all movement
and glass gets washed up on the island
reminding us how even heavy things tend toward shore
where a woman walking alone after a break-up
might find the glass and think it's a message for her
until she thinks of my sister
because out here everyone sad thinks of my sister
while my sister in her bed waits for it to get light
so it will get dark again
and everything in between is impossible
and so is the getting-to-sleep and the waking-up
and even to lie by her side is almost impossible
my body like eyes reading some incomprehensible text

who asks *is she better now?*

who's cleared the shore of every piece of washed glass,
restored the scattered glass all softened and battered by the waves
to its former state—a vase on a windowsill one spring day
with yellow flowers and fresh water
and a penny for good luck and to keep the flowers from wilting?

there is no other light, she says, it's all dark here

the same front page says 15,000 people killed in an earthquake,
they keep trying to dig them out—

is it better to have someone to blame?

cold this morning—

31jano1, *small gathering in my mother's home, Seattle*

my niece wore a t-shirt with a yellow smiley face,
the shirt my sister claims from the catalogue they sent her—

everything unclaimed got buried together
and it fit in one coffin

we lit eighty-eight candles,
they weren't supposed to drip
but the colored wax spilled off the mantelpiece right down to
the floor

sometimes I try to convince claire the girls aren't dead
the plane didn't go down

you're sick and lossened my friend told me in a dream
she said it mean but it was the truth

lossened sounds like *lozenge*,
something to suck on, a tiny flange to shunt under the wobbly
tongue

there was candlelight on my mother's face
as she shaped the wax drippings into tiny rafts,
held wax to the flame and taught my son what to do,
she said, *do it like this*

islands of wax,
bodies of wax, branches—

in that light she looked like a candle,
pain lit up, as in church

what's unfinished is what we love—
the ceiling at St. Mark's Cathedral
and its raw beams

we don't finish, we leave the door unlocked