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Spell of Motion

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Spell of Motion

I live only here, between your eyes and you.
—Elizabeth Bishop

This is how you inherit the future.
You stand there looking for the missing parts
but only see people practicing gravity.
They make syllables of promise then rise into air.
They are beautiful and distant and will stay this way.
Will let you down but never remember.
Sometimes speech repairs silence but only in your head.
Only in this carnival wind can you say things like,
this city is hollow because you want it to feel that way.
People love vertically. The rain falls in stages.
Underground, we transport our bodies between places.
We reconsider the distance and it is terrible.
On the Discovery channel, a man is saying our bodies are lightning rods.
Where we touch we leave marks. There is nothing safe about this.
About felled trees we drag home.
in small numbers
    or the electrical fish we eat from the river.
We manage sensation
    by calling it involuntary.
The compass of sound:
    siren, apology, lie.
We say she broke herself
    about whoever we know is sad
and may need us. I understand that
    home is a hinge.
We migrate because we have to
    by swinging.
Once my mother said she’d stand
    between me & pain.
She couldn’t know the radius
    of here to there
which is the length of time
    outside of time
and the privacy of sky,
    fractioned and forgotten.
Like childhood, like the arc of birds
    in this slow wind.
If I tell you a story, it is the erasure
    of another story.
If you appear
    it is never for long.