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Elegy for the Builder's Wife

Nick Courtright

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NICK COURTRIGHT

Elegy for the Builder's Wife

Slow build, houses where thousands live,
skeletons of houses without roofs, without walls,

houses like strange bones rising along red paths
we've always walked but will not walk again—

these are like sheets that will never feel the skin,
the white silences made most desperate

amongst so many indistinct voices,
when her red throat gently closes up.

In her hands the geraniums shake like railroads,
the plaster skin of walls becomes unattached

and a great wave draws back, making naked
the unknown earth beneath the sea, only

to close it off again. We are the builders
trembling under a bridge, pouring the gray rock

as her death calls through the din,
and he remembers nothing but what he whims.