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Requiem

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Requiem

After Lorca

The moon is colder than ever,
capable of belonging
to us both. I want
to swallow it,
stow its brightness
in my throat.
Look there, spider silk
stitched near the horse's eye,
and the fur on the cat's belly,
stroked by wind.

I want to ask
if you ever felt the same
tug, the way my head
was turned, early on,
toward the pail of milk, bluing
with flies or the small
white moths, wet
and dying in the grass.
Why it was rapture I found
under a collapsed dome
of snow, the sting and water light,
bizarre reprisal of birth, pulled
feet-first by my father.

I don't know who made me
cry over the pumpkin's
smashed grin, or who made me hear
a green and silver *lonesome*
in the old woman opening
hard candy in the last
pew. I don't know why I hear
the tick of leaves unfurling

like exit wounds. Was it the same
for you?

Most of all I'm curious
about the box of French perfume.
When opened, it held the same formaldehyde
pang of the woman in her casket,
hair already less red, water still
in her lungs. I was just a little girl
outside the church when her husband
bucked and kicked, wailed
something I shouldn't have been able
to translate but did. A child
died in front of you—
you learned something
similar then.

You needed orange trees
to say for you that the world
was both too much and
never enough—the old horses
in the field, the lunar eclipse
and the beautiful costumed bodies
of men. *Your ear full of fresh-cut flowers—*
if you didn't have the work
of translating them, what
would you have done with your life?