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Estates

Pamela Stewart

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and always felt that horn
 twist in her side—
 ghostly as the one that tore my brother
 and gored and gored him since the age of five
 when I was born, he imagined his darling mother
 forsaking him
 to bring me home alive.

Estates / Pamela Stewart

They are rivals—the Northern Lights and
 this white melon in its black cane-chair.

—Emily Dickinson

I am noticing from my window how the grass
 Must be startled by my sister lifting
 Bundles of straw to spread over
 The carrots and turnips. Now November,
 And last evening it was Father
 Who saw it first, down on the common. He
 Ran across to sound the church bells.
 Everyone coming out of their houses
 From supper onto the lawns
 Watched the sky. Purple
 And bronze, unlike any jewels or cloth I know.
 I saw it from this window, the way the trees
 Were black and terrible within this radiance.

It’s some time now that a man moved out
 Beyond any approaches. Twice before, but
 Distance is most severe for he does exist
 Somewhere. Not like the blue, frozen faces
 Brought up from the South. Those losses can
 Be named and placed.
 Perhaps beside a little sister wrapped
 In white satin. And what
 Is my service. Left to be here. I am not
 What they think if they think at all. God,
 Keep us from what they call households! We are the
 Brittle sisters. A carriage at the door,
 And whoever knocks belongs to someone
Who's supposed to be me. But if they think
Of me at all, it isn't me.

In Bed / David Shapiro

We would sail away in this big conversation
Take it in our heads to go into the financial purse together
Find only empty islands so our tears would patter on rivers
like tins of kerosene
And when I saw you I would gobble up rivers, matchboxes and all.

When you are asleep I will appear and do that some more
And pass the winter like Caesar in Gaul
So I race after you but you put up the storm windows
I lie in bed like the happy book in the library,
in spite of poverty and pain.

And one day a dry wind blows fractions of a postcard at my feet
The wind that likes to whisk you out of bed
And cover all the space it can reach, swerving
Carefully away, into the black like the balls in the tennis court.

There was no lead in the lead pencil.
There is no bone in whalebone.
In bed your tissue-balloons exploded and Louisa May Alcott
and the long-hoarded dimes
And you came to give orders to your devoted subjects,
who shivered into pieces.

This was our game for the old pack of opponents
And it could be played flat on your back.
You twirled the old cards and aimed right for my head
You advised me to draw the lines lightly, so they could be
easily erased.

Now I see your pictures of a goose presence and rabbit identity.
Each of those creatures must be and is threatened with
insanity.
Dropping to your knees, you protected my old mirror
from the lunging air
In it, your own face was white, like candles on the Christmas tree.

When we were tired out we fell among fishermen
You and I swore on sunny seaweed that this penny would be