The Woman in Buffalo Is Given to Waiting

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Becky Birtha · The woman in Buffalo is given to waiting

She neglects her work.  
English ivy rust on the sill.  
The linen goes unwashed.  
The poems do not get written.

The woman has no companion,  
She has no man.  
She neglects her friends—  
If they were to come to her house  
They would not find her  
waiting  
for them.

The waiting focuses:  
The center of the morning  
Pulls her taut,  
Holds her still until she  
Hears  
the iron lid drop  
against the iron box  
Descends the stair to retrieve  
letters that will  
receive no reply—  
napped into a rubber band.
	he one she awaited did not come  
if there were such a one.  
She returns to her kitchen  
Draws herself in to continue.
The woman in Buffalo
Will make an art of waiting
    in which she will achieve perfection
She will invest her strength in waiting
    dense as a massive brown mountain,
          go still and solid like a stone.
She will grow into waiting
Like an oak into an iron fence.