Over Coffee

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OVER COFFEE

What you mean to say about the film is that it moved you, the woman alone at the end beside a burning field of cane, her brother carried off in a covered truck to be tortured/shot. That you’re not sure but think it wasn’t about politics but bedrooms and kitchens, hands and eyes, the light of dusk because it stops us on the stairs and makes us bless a child earnestly chiding her doll or cherish a crow lifting from an oak, charcoal smearing blue, when we feel tender and vast and brittle because the emotions which are hybrids of anguish and elation are the mediums for spirits binding to flesh. But your husband and friends, up on genres and the lineage of dictators, wielding jargon like the clipped phrases of birds who know what the trills signify, speak of fads, Marxist insinuations, the opening scene’s allegory of whore as El Salvador, fought over, pierced, beaten by men. They travel staunchly in the other direction, away from sentiment, from the image of the woman on her knees at the edge of a field turning orange, into history, they abandon the facts of smoke, the muslin dress given by her husband, her stare as the truck zippers-up horizon, gets lost in the distance with its appetite for souls. By the time they ask your opinion you don’t want to talk, knowing faith dissipates through words, sure you’ll passionately refer to our indebtedness to memory, suggest that by imagining the vanished flower, repeating the name of the lost cat, we retain our lives, webbed by what we’ve touched and needed, the persistence of love despite death an act.
of vengeance, a refusal to diminish, you'll swear
the film was about the failure of every goodbye.
All of this you try not to say but do in a clumsy rush
as if the words are falling down, then a pause,
the surrounding chatter coming in like the slurrings
of waves as you hold your breath on a sea-wall,
then the shift, their eyes dilating in recognition
of conviction, finally the stammers, the rush to be
the first to address this exhilarating stranger.