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Because We Are Not Separate

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Patricia Goedicke

Because We Are Not Separate

Morning. Here on the calm bed waking
smoothly, almost as if there were no difference

between the center and the outer edges, those thin fringes
most of us race around in

and can't get out of, trapped

like cars on the expressways, with the hot
breath of exhaust on our necks, frantic

as scuttling crabs, with the sea drawn back from its margins
retreating, leaving its brittle frill on the beach

no wonder there's no faith we can feel, not permanently,

*

except behind the eyelids drifting.

Idle as dust motes, quiet
now, here in the dark of the self

where everyone lives, hidden

in the blessed secular smoothness
every once in awhile of no crime, no criminal,

first to return is the skin, exquisite

as a hummingbird, the swift kick of its
tiny feathers flickering

almost too fast but slow down,
here are the legs, I can feel them!

*

In the empty rain barrel what has hardened

over the years squeezed dry, tossed in a waterless corner
is blossoming now, unfurling itself like a sponge,

as white sheets slip along the calves
like a cool breeze, iridescent

the foot like a leaf flexes
and then relaxes, such lightness

I can hardly believe it, floating in my bones

with nothing to weigh me down, connected
to the hairbrush on the floor, to the humming telephone lines

outside my window there is sunlight, there is water
and a thousand bittersweet cries,

*

for in spite of the harsh traffic,
the bleeding houses, the smoke

or because of it, who knows
because we are not separate,

by accident sometimes it really is possible
to join our own edges:

with luck and a long sigh moving

soft, wild, familiar as a wet flower,
gardenia pearled in its leaves,

the self that is no self contracts and then expands,
the boat that is no boat takes over

*

as the ship that contains nothing disappears
far back in the head, it sinks below the horizon

to a sea full of tiny strangers

who are not strangers, deep as the world is small
among gray land masses, vague memories moving

like lazy swimmers, here in the shy dark
of our own pillows, pieces of all we have ever met

or not met, easy as feathers come sailing
into each exquisite pore of the skin

entire oceans going out
and then returning, meeting themselves coming back in.