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## Of-of-Step

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## OUT-OF-STEP

Let me stroke that hurt leg.  
My grandmother had one too.  
And your grandfather and mine  
met in a foreign land  
and predicted that someday  
we'd walk side-by-side.  
The cat who always circles me  
has been waiting in the wings  
while our arms have been entwined  
and this cat is mewling  
at a hawk who is screaming  
and flying over your grandmother  
on the day she was born.  
Where the road leads cursed and charmed  
we're running side-by-side.  
Your words have taken on my color.  
The bells of your breath  
are filled with my breathing.  
The cat mews.  
In the fields our grandparents are screaming.

But there are other years too.  
Our legs can't keep on walking.  
Yours was injured in the eye of a storm  
on a day pressed into my memory  
when our child was waving in my womb.  
The girl in the phone booth  
whom you didn't know  
had pressed herself against you  
and allowed you to kiss her.  
The cat had curled at her side,  
the hawk had screamed above her  
like a wicked blessing,  
screamed until she walked out-of-step beside you.  
Where the road spreads itself open in alarm

I stumble towards an alley.  
When will I hear our pet dove coo?  
In her shallow grave  
my grandmother is rocking and rocking.  
Please soothe my hurt leg,  
she croons and she coos.  
And overhead the sky closes in.