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Ritual at Midnight

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RITUAL AT MIDNIGHT

This is what I do. First I kneel
to the gods of desolation.
They give me the sacrament of memory.
It never satisfies.
It is the consolation
I have no use for except to fill
these silences you leave behind.

From this silence there is no reprieve.
I am ready to promise anything,
swear I will starve,
live on bread and water, a little fruit,
the gatherings of dust.
If I could only find some bark
to chew on in this wasteland
where there are no trees.
If I could only sleep.

If I could only sleep myself awake
back in the day we saw the two
eaglets in their nest,
when we heard with all our ears
the yellow beat of wings;
when the edges of the light
were crystal and we were the shining
feathers of the eaglets' flight.
I fall into the familiar dark.

Then the dark gives you up to me
whole, dressed for the meal.
The butcher of the night
slices you piece by piece, turns
you on the spit, feeds me
this expensive dish. I take
your flank between my hands and bite.