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For All You Know

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FOR ALL YOU KNOW

You choose a day and ride it close
as a daughter, loyal to invisible
hairs on the arm of a small-boned girl.
At home in the glitter
of a five and dime you are worth it

young again and freely stupid,
wearing white on a dark day
like a flag. This morning, your mother
mouthed *love* when she cooked your egg
sunnyside down. To go from here

means pain, your guard let down,
the childhood farm where all
the animals have been eaten or sold.
Grandpa never loved the barn
and Grandma gives her past
away like someone else's china.
Where you played house in the machine-shed
it was oil you smelled, not grain.
The queen, the king, you knew
the truth about the humpbacked
chicken-coop. From the doorway
you watched far stairs ripple in grass.

It seemed yellow horses galloped
the twister down Johnny's field, leaving
everything unchanged. Ten years your uncle
stalks that gray mouth in every bottle
rising and falling with the backbone
of his life. The perfectly ugly August
his dream touched down
high winds buckled the tracks, drove
straw through fence poles.
You might have surrendered

to learn it never leaves, the calm world
riding the same twisted rail.

In the granite station blocked
at the town's heart, you discover
changing levels without moving.
It was a stairway you stood still for.
That wrestling before dawn to know
the most honest thing you've ever done.
You mother yourself at last.
For all you know, the angel
refused you like money.