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The Exchange

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THE EXCHANGE

After the burning of the lilac after travels
through rains beside jetties the sounds of alarms
a factory burning in the distance forklifts
emerging from the foliage and driving beside us for a while
after the stepping on dry stones on wet stones
in the midst of raging streams
knowing I could be washed off them
unlike the starfish welded to rocks I could be pressed by a wave
into a bank of mud and ferns
after carrying the toolbox through a warehouse enormous
spinning brushes
after the unfurling of burlap scrolls down corridors of stone
the sound of bare feet slapping the marble floor of the colonnade
with its faint odor of lemons
after watching the dogs play briskly in the fields
after the leveling of mountains we ascended in the rain
our clothes soaked
the dye bleeding into our skin
after fingering the scraped granite its white scars
after seeing the dung burned to ash blown away like wisps of hair
over a parched horizon
after the graph of green light on the monitor
has enveloped the skull's horizons
after the turquoise chopstick has been removed from the flute
after the meetings face to face with partisans looking through us
at a star the students who carry black envelopes
in which they have sealed the image of the child overhead
climbing a palm tree towards the sun students
who trade life for bleached terminologies skin for pears
lacquered unreal the taxidermist stuffs today's news into dead hides
I want to say something
A sentry appeared at the window with a ladle of water
azure sky above passing clouds reflected in his helmet
he says look here drink the blue

is also in the water
I want to say something I want
to say at night I see fires in the hills hear shots in the distance I
am almost
thankful for my captivity but that's what they want me
to think I have the faint knowledge
of forests reflected in the puddles of city streets my dreams
taste of horrors I look forward to
the van parked in the street below driving slowly beside me
when I go
out for cigarettes I walk the wind on my face
in minutes will fill the black pockets
of a woman sleeping in a hammock where
will this end after
the delight of bodies closing their eyes in the sprinkler's spray
after the plants awake me with green
the tiretracks on the lawn still warm I remembered
in the night I had come through the woods to the brick
church our room in its attic you
in the clawfoot tub my head screwed into a cage of mirrors
in one the aspen's yellow leaves shimmering
in another the face of the fox in the third
hundreds of men in white disassembling a charred galleon
in the desert and what do I hold
now but this black leaf its edges burned with amber
I have made confessions like traveling through a series of tunnels
without a steering wheel we are the blades
cropping the tops of trees in the forests
of each other's minds will this end
after the blackboards are rinsed by a rainstorm
that paints the asphalt with snails
after brushfires scour the hills of broom
where the fox finds himself encircled by flames the distant
black tower
its needle in the sky's blue arm
tower from which we stole the red flag we hid
in the drainpipe we returned it was gone replaced by urine by
two blue stones we set on the floor of the canoe we pushed

into the lake remember we watched as it turned and was
suddenly pulled
over the falls
after nights on the roof naked backs to the sun-warmed tiles wind
splicing its fingers under our arms the first
summer raindrop on the back of my hand the hand you
later kissed
and slipped into your shirt to show me
the key taped to your breast which was gone when you
were found
facedown between two blue stones I threw at the sky they landed
in the grass without sound
after we said goodbye to the farm of autumn its cistern
clogged with leaves and rustwater the buzz of locusts in tall grass
through which shadows move towards the children
who have spent the day in the sun stuffing
Grandfather's clothes with straw that blackbirds slept in
after you ran naked across a wet lawn chased by spotlights
which brush a stomach convulsing with laughter the
crescent moon
tickling your ear her pubis at your chin the sudden silence
after you are gone when the strangers take your shirts off hangers
and wear them