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My Life as an Average Long Distance Runner

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**MY LIFE AS AN AVERAGE LONG DISTANCE
RUNNER**

Time might as well balance on a table
balanced on a ball, in the rain, while a city
on a scale of one to ten won't shape itself
in a day. The Romans drive fast, even faster,
& cats enjoy the wall-to-wall ruin of a body,
water rising in a lung, plenty of stone to go around.

A sword through the wooden box.

I'm not sure how I've gotten where I am,
the cigarette hanging over distant countries,
a slack rope dragging from the heels
long after my friends have gone home.

I understand the Italian for spiritual,
spit in a fire, the word for water, no more,
not even that. I saw a shepherdess from the window.
She was tending the surface of a fountain,
the Spanish Steps, three to six inches by morning.

I somewhat agreed.

Bodies aren't ruined in a day, an exotic tiger,
a pair of white liberties. Tremors rise inside
for hours, even minutes, & I've rehearsed
the same turns in a recent life, the hem & haw
of a horse drawn carriage, marriage,
my eyes focused between the blinders.

The bed burns when John clears his throat
(sword swallow), dinner heated by a fire,

by a friend. Might I put his statue on the table?
Another acrobat without a net, a small circle
where the ringman packs his bags?

It's obvious I'm the one who left.

Tomorrow I'll wear a turtleneck, a five percent
margin of error, blood cleared from the throat
in a shower, while the lungs inside ...

I strongly disagree with morning:

A passenger stows her leg in the carriage,
waits a month herself before the wheel flattens time
into red beads beneath the edgeless blade,
an ordinary day numbered with ravens,
one foot forward, stopped, then another.