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After the Gallatin River, Outside Bozeman, Montana

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After the Gallatin River, Outside Bozeman, Montana

for Greta

The moment *after* begins. Birds on your sill
offer themselves. A flock of thumbs. Flight. No question
of ascending. Speed. After. What did I do?
An act I remember but can't place. Something small.
The turning of the faucet. Afraid to move the papers that stack like layers
of earth.
Not –glow, not –light, something silver and sticky.
After water. Smoke. After gauzy curtains blowing in the middle of a hot
day.

The space between nail and flesh.
We are fast as highway nerves. Wooded trail,
dapple and grid of birds. Twilight cuts
the light half from the dark half. We are edges, we are now,
the moment before now, after now. We move away.
The sugar still sweetens in a blue bowl on the counter.

*

Imagine the whole valley filling with it.
Silvery smoke, not air, more ash and fog.
The camping sparks underneath indistinguishable as nightfall.
Diamonds at the gray field's edge. Light?
This sea comes too fast and in shades of dust. Are you here,
this abyss of a dream and have I dreamt this highway back to you.
The hot light through the pine tops.

Begin on the bank
east of bear country and a big sky. Sun sets
itself down like a teacup in your lap. At home, your spoon
next to the typewriter next to a window and a curtain
sheer enough to see one way, almost the other. Your arsenal

of pain, the sitting down and the standing, bone after bone
after bone.

Later, underneath, dreamt a crow, his tail on fire.
The breathing and the breath this imagined drowning in air not water.
Take me with you. I floated
the river that cuts through that valley, bumped
at the water's lowest since last year. I jumped off a bridge.
The cold and deep water. So far away you must dredge for shadows.

*

About solitude. The aspens, quieter snow,
maybe it was a Sunday, air a prayer, nether-bound. What about boats.
Words foam on our lips. Loose them to whatever's outside.
Do you believe in it. That solace. Are there questions left to ask.
Is there anything to know.

The rush of it,
siphoning off, the thrushes at your sill, the dust in the room, shards of glass.
The train shakes the water of the water glass.
We are water and it's a wonder we do what we do.