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Advice Without Any Expectation or Reliability

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PATRICK WHITFILL

ADVICE WITHOUT ANY EXPECTATION OR RELIABILITY

To be talked about to the point of abstracting the self, but less, say, sheet to a ghost, and more salt in a sugar jar full of sugar. That sweet. Heroics more of an acquiescence—dropping the glass *because* of its shatter, not in spite of, not in regards to. And then the whole floor feels splintered with shards we can't tiptoe around enough, so here we are again, on the couch, pretending this is some kind of an arrival. I made you soup earlier, and while the water boiled for the noodles, a wasp dropped onto my shoulder. I'd like to say something about agitation and expectancy, some good line where the two are given equal measure, cause and effect running down hallways together, giddy on champagne. Can you feel it, the way I breathe underneath my sweater? I have so many adjustments to get to, so many tweaks to pinch so I can for once claim to appreciate delicacy. Quickly, quickly. I think it's interesting, how neither one of us will sweep up the slivers on the floor because we're worried about what we can't see cutting into us, being driven in its

miniscule way straight into our hearts. No matter how we say it, or to whom, because given all the tendency toward falling apart, it will sound more significant than it probably is, but soon, it's going to get darker earlier. What about using tweezers? What if one of us scoped out where the other could kneel, tweeze out the glass lines we're sure are there? What if we took turns? One on the couch, the other running the long side of their hand over the floor, hoping whatever electricity the skin has will help us find whatever we can't see. To spend a night like that is what I meant to say to the wasp after I flicked it off my shoulder, into the sink, and drowned it there. Whatever that might feel like. More of a wish than the sound a body makes when it moves, not to say those aren't exactly the same thing.