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As Brancusi Said at an Earlier Hour

Peter Balakian

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AS BRANCUSI SAID AT AN EARLIER HOUR

for Doug Bennett

Ben. I never made it back to that bar
in Elmira where you and that thug Fitzie
used to end weekends in rage.
Where you crowned your girl with broken
glass and washed the body from
your hands. Every mirror broken
and still your face whole in each frame.
And that last headpiece you made from
rusted lead. They believed you'd pillage
every town from Elmira to the border
and disappear into the North wood
waiting for the second coming.

They say you were unrecognizable.
Steel twisted around your arms,
handlebars locked around your head.
When I went back, your room still
stunk of clay and wet cloth.
Nothing untouched. Beer cans
in the toilet and that selfless
portrait without eyes dug into the plaster.
Everything was still except one woman
on the sill, your hand half-pulled
from her head and her eyes
still waiting for you to attack them.