

Four Untitled Prose Poems

Between one sleep and another, on the hinge, where the plastic is refolded, as you're turning away, turning toward, as you let go before handling the next—a peek of the abyss, pore-seeker. A way through. A way. The car cools, ticks in the night air, measuring its wait. A helicopter sends a beam down into the fog. How far in? Measured by time. The abyss takes a long time. There really is no danger of landing.

As she woke from her screaming dream she heard her voice—a weak, worthless gasp, little more than air. On that seam she heard herself before her shame—an odd shame in the dark alone as she was—before leaving into sleep, before leaving on the liner from the quay with her parcels. We test goodbye new every time, to tear out a few stitches, to measure what enters.

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Measured under a moonless night—steps toward a door which was a mirror. What I did not say bumped into a mirror late in the dark; there was *some* light there. Though it was not a way through, it was a way. That is not space; that is glass. The ordinary rest of it was untallied. A swallow of water, cold through my chest.

On this road, to say the name would scare the creature; to look at it, to do anything of my own is to lose. I distract myself from what I must know by counting a pulse, repeating words which can't be placed. The entire purpose of my life is to hear the claws skitter, the little snout sniff in my ear, bear the firm sharp tongue in my mind, teasing me to figure away.

She told about the colored flags above the filling station at dusk, and my heart fell open. Are we always at the mercy of? She had seen the scraps of plastic waving in their line; they were desperate and celebrating; cars shone under the quivering fluorescence; the drivers faced in different directions, their hands limp on the pump handles. She told us.

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