

Paloma in the Bull's Belly

Patricia Goedicke

“ . . . juran que esa paloma no es otra cosa más que su alma. . . ”
—“Cucurrucucú Paloma” from the soundtrack
of Almodovar’s film, *Talk to Her*

The dove with flamenco breath, at first modestly,
purring on a CD—
anguish cradling itself in its own glottals,

pain on the intake as moan,
as choked feathers, furred
open-throated sobs—

But the orchestra is revving up:
*Come into my bull ring, my ravenous parlor, my operating
theater:*

Did Tristram, did the lovely Iseult ever get together again,
did they call?
No, never too Wagnerian. Or Messiaenen either.

So grieve,
go ahead and grieve,
in the heart’s gutters groan,

forget everything and rock,
let pain on the outtake stomp, batter the table,

let steely guitar spit, hard as an axe
before consonant and after, the chipped rush
of hot breath around smoking vowels, *hah!*

Heels spur, staccato castanets snap
as skirts lunge and sweep, scarlet with rage

at chemo wards for children. At death
and sex which brings it on—
and the bull of war its offspring.

As the surface to human flying bomb
from the beast’s belly detonates,
leaves nothing

but the CD in the background wailing, listen:
the black barge for lovers heaves by
 once and once only so climb onto it now,

together for the last time let sorrow,
let arias rip open, let them seed the harrowed ground
 with misery, let the bile waters wreck you

and then leave you, with those still here
 shivering, finally uncoupled

on bare sidewalks washed up, littered among split shells
as we should be, as we were from the beginning,
 razors in a world without cover.