

## *A FIRST ENCOUNTER*

Invading forces burn their boats at landfall. That is how you know they plan to stay. In novels things happen slow and for a reason. Grim exposure splits the lark but finds no seed, no song. That is how you know it isn't you awake in hallways with silhouettes of sister, graceless candies, rust of ill -fortune, -timing. Something like the mind divides the motes of syllable from soot, breath from the breathless, Xs out the dew.

## L A I D O P E N

A mother folds at the knee to kiss her child, creasing like the gate of a fence, smoothes his hair and whispers *homeward*, her mouth a bone button. The world turns on toward worldliness: taxi-wagons trot away, pinwheels spin on fences. Swell of strings. Obsession dictates all ghosts stay their place, the pen's obsidian nib drag with it the tide through the night soot-blackened of the moon. She tells her story to any chance comer who will ask: of farm and famine, early love. Minor cadence. One hand leads another through the cobbled street instructing. She sickened but survived. Worked, pressed on, and now broke into the tune which had all day long been running in her head.

*THE TRICK-CYCLIST THRIVES  
BY CRAFTED ACCIDENT  
IN THE SAFETY OF HIS  
FLAME-RETARDANT SUIT*

Imagination one day, memory the next. Rough strands fray and later knot. Dædalus trod our myths forlorn. One day, you're flying toward the sun. The next, your son is in the afterworld. He tried his hardest to forget and later not to: Rye straws freeze amid illusory deer. To the saga of its sum, the tried-cymbal thrums a crash accompaniment.