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Darkness. Daguerre's voice.

Before

dryades, torrents, demons, flames, gales, drapes, streetlamps,
panoramas, tresses, coves, cataracts, braids, bees, cells, pier-glass windows,
wainscots, wanderings, mirrors, barley sheaves, silver cups, eddies, meals,
rhymes, ivy, boughs, fountains, branches, brines, harvests, sprays, bows,
amaranths, caves, acanthuses, wines, dews, curtains, greens, toils, horses,
spirits, stems, pears, wagons, gray-eyed goddesses, dials, stains, cobbles,
cornices, mornings, arcades, sages, glades, crowds, lambs, pillows,
stages, and brickbats,

I marked my invention with a dagger.

A cursive D forms to light the darkness.

Light slowly reveals Daguerre pacing in his candlelit atelier.

Sensitive coats sensitive coats

Think color of her hair think oil she scents with

Cloud scythes hover on the ceiling

Must be romantic by today's standards

Pausing by his laboratory table, he adds oil to a vial beside a stack of metal plates.

Bring lavender fields, rain's metal release

Must be dramatic by today's standards

Adds iodine.

Bring word of mouth in perfumed irony

Must be real by today's standards

Adds more iodine, contents swirled.

Bring fixations—the cello, the portrait, the book, the gun

Could the message, what appears, be clear? Or cloaked?

*He eyes a sketch of a Lucanian bell krater, showing Hermes pursuing a woman.**

For her! For her!

Thunder clap.

*Purchased in 1839 by Department of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities, The Louvre.

Seated in Théâtre Lyrique, Louise watches a ship traverse wide sea.

Slice an icy sheet with the hull

loop the drap'd curvature and pinprick sky

he's an anchorite landmass sway'd by umbilical chain

Woman on the shore with blowing hair.

her location mask'd by swallows where swells thin
to tooth of comb

if a noose comes to mirror, she pulls the fabric thro'

jagg'd wave circumference

Chorus: Stitch hidden, a star

Captain on a ship attempting to groom himself.

grit-check in the shaving cup

Chorus: Crazy quilt, interlock

a way of seeing darkens

when you're both the same, each just a measure of sea

In a vanity mirror, Louise looks, as if for answers.

I fear for his sanity. I fear for my own.

I fear his empty reach. I fear my own.

I fear the chamber of his mind. I fear my own.

I fear I am a ghost. I fear I am not his ghost.

I fear I am his ghost. I fear I am not his ghost.

I fear his chemistry. I fear his chemistry.

I fear he leaves his spectacles. I fear he is a spectacle.

I fear he wants immediacy. I fear he devalues tradition.

I fear he is a laughingstock. I fear I am a laughingstock.

I fear he hides a ticket. I fear what is his ticket.

Buries her head in her hands.

Rachel and footlights

Hair and stockings with crisscross shadows. Taffeta sounds.

My last attempt at reaching the conceived sitting
in darkness metaphorically cold
but there's a slant light also biting so a second attempt
cantilevering in cadence beyond catkins
fingering morning but I come too early
or most likely very late.

Branches rub together.

So third fling backward
heels scratching grayness as if hatched
hot and cold fronts fishnetting and this is boundless
where one needn't hold breath part in hope
part in desire for what binds is floating
what boosts is fleeting my finest point—no crag
no baby animals suckling woody tips.

Sound of a glass placed on a marble table.

Not supposed emptiness but ice melting
to spiracles sculpted between the carnal and the heady
a crystalline so easily toppled, cold no longer penetrates
and you've acclimated to peril
anything goes gutsy reward.
Divorced from my body I drag and give it up
as time for presence for prescience for luminous understanding

Wintry window.

This fetish sit in a window preen opacity.
Developed by sublimation when sky fell
as paper after sparks made rubbing rocks
before the micrograph of a snowflake
guides us back to giant stones overturned
for ancient indecency

Torn page sound.