



TRANSNATIONAL LITERATURE

linger on

so I'm sitting on my floor you'd be happy
to know, cross-legged chain smoking listening
to the Velvet Underground

seemed as if the world fell hard
on you that summer, grinned
like a maniac humming her name

a quarter of a lifetime for an incense holder
made from driftwood she found in Cancun
or the painting she wanted you to have

because at seventeen you were her muse
or maybe the dogs goddamn Scotties
they barked at squirrels all day

you could've sworn it had been a week
but we both knew that the moon was full
and it had been four times more

you sat alone, barefoot cross-legged
listening to the Velvet Underground
letting ink drip every day

a kind of blood forming words
because it was a comfort
I could not give

Heather Taylor Johnson. 'linger on'.
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life had been easier the summer before
when we spent seven dollars and bought that first album
thought we'd been witness to Lou Reed's first breath

over a six-pack of Foster's in a muggy Atlanta
one-bedroom downtown grit red corner house
we tried to understand it all

I remember your long wise face
the soundlessness of your airy laugh
the slump of your shoulders those patched-up jeans

bless Lou Reed who had taken his first
and all of his consecutive breaths
in a time and place we will never know –

bless us for imagining.

Heather Taylor Johnson