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HELEN CARLSON

APOCALYPSE IN A MINOR KEY

It's the time of my room when nothing's real yet,
Six in the morning poised in the minor
Key of a day that has not yet declared
Its weather. The genesis of light
Is lolling about the woodwork, staccato
On yesterday's newspaper or the breakfast table
Stilled between hungers and orange drapes,
And here in this pause of my room that has stationed
Schedules of disaster and fracture by fracture
Of impromptu cathedrals and gypsy laughter,

I consider that other country of you
I traveled without language or rings on my fingers
Or bells on my toes or the laughter of raindrops
Spelled on my mouth, though metric by metric
I saluted the bold green Maybe of your eyes
Till I saw it paragraphed into Forget.
And I learned the time that is named and lost
By hand and heart, not by the moon,
And how lost is a world that never finds
Its pulse in time for promises.

But here in the tip-toe time of my room,
Metrics that fled the synthetic terrain
Between a Maybe and Forget
Creep back to play at life at my ankles;
For here in my room at the global conclusion
Of tears I have watched the vestal fingers
Of mornings feature little by little
The void away, chair by chair,
As Geppetto did with a block of wood;
It's a Second Frolic of the ancient air,

A chemistry of mercy at the sundry ends
Of worlds that linger at windows.