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Poems

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Abstract

TEN LETTERS, A SOMETHING Z, SYNAESTHESIA, NIAGARA, A NEW PHASE

Maura Dooley

TEN LETTERS, A SOMETHING Z

He always grasps the wrong end now,
searching for a light but almost had it then,

the memory of something all gone up in smoke,
and tries again. She wants to fill him in

the way they used to crack the cryptic. Four letters,
Another country, they do things differently there.

She turns his cigarette around, strikes a match
Now he's the anagram she can't solve.

SYNAESTHESIA

A white butterfly visits the rosemary bush.
Its hesitation on the tricky leaves
throws up a fragrance seen through glass.

When he opens the door on childrens' voices,
the scent of remembrance, april sunshine,
the air is shivery with promise.
The second before the bomb was just like this.

NIAGARA

It's what I'd been looking for, I suppose,
a Force I'd have to give in to.
The speed of water, charged light,
that sudden drop

that makes you want to just step in
and let it carry you.

Brave enough to take the boat upstream
I'm drenched, caught in a storm

of sun and mist, dense as promise.
But at the hotel the pool is flat blue,

I make a tidy, regular pattern
moving from the deep end to the shallow.

A NEW PHASE

And I learnt how I mustn't write of it
must not (italics here), being a woman and wary,
being a woman and mad as a hormone,
mad as that princess – Alexandra? Alice?
– who thought she'd swallowed a piano. But no,
this was a baby. A baby, and the simple complexities
of the calendar, the waxing and the waning of the great
and of the tiny egg, these were to be avoided.
So that when this winter day soaks the sea
with a thin light and you extend an infant hand
with its fistful of bright, new crescents, I smile,
perplexed, to hear you chant: moon, moon, moon.