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Periphery

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Periphery

When the bore needle left my father
one last time, he grew taut, and full lunar.
Transcendent, his body wavered in the satin
as if confused on the proper manner of falling.
Closing his eyelids, I remember feeling safer,
his eyes surrendering to the ocular darkness
behind them, their jasper descending from view
with more authority than the rest of him.
This was my first annihilation: his lips
open like a wave. But try as I might,
I never seem able to stop him. And lately,
everything seems to hinge on the next attempt:
another fistful of your soaked hair,
our double image shaking from the water
imperceptibly, lucid and dissolving
in every direction. *What happens when we spill
together?* you ask, standing so close to me
I wonder why you dare to speak in plural.
But how do I answer the voice emanating
from the steam? Or admit how your weight
against my shoulder blades terrifies me?
Or how your hips disappear like my father
when they hit me: as if multiplying against my body,
the scent of clematis clinging to my skin
like secondhand smoke, like shame.

-Dimitri McCloghry
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