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on waking at 3 a.m. // First visit, during the county fair

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GRACE GILBERT

on waking at 3 a.m.

in this dreadful pattern of insomnia
 & wondering if i could love you,
each unflinching minute
 hums thick like a pulse—
a torrent of frantic wings beating
 against the soundless expanse
of an unremarkable bedroom; somewhere,
 where my mind houses our sleeping bodies
and little else. i envision our love
 as that small breath
i always draw at the start of a dream,
 sharp and secretive,
a tiresomely private mention
 of a world you'll never visit.
there is a cruel diligence
 to keeping you here,
listless and expectant,
 when my love has eroded to nothing
but some unearthed relic
 of need.

First visit, during the county fair

after Anne Sexton

it is June.
 i am tired
of being strong.
 i place wet wild daisies
on stone, a weary offering.
 some petals obstruct your name.
of all the sad new facts here,
 i would much rather admit
the daisies.
 it is beginning to rain,
a slow one, tapping on the canopy above
 before it begins to dimple
this bleak neighborhood,
 & i lie in the dirt next to you
one last time,
 allowing it.
i know the injury
 of acknowledging death
in back of every i love you—
 accepting what falls before it does,
but goodbye
 is always hovering like this,
a red balloon tied
 to a wrist.