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## Four Poems

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## ALL I HAVE NOT REQUIRED

It's true, this is the kind of world  
where anyone's dog  
could bite you. I knew a dog  
like that once. He refused  
to wag, though it was painful at first  
to live without signs  
of recognition.

He made up for it  
barking long into the night at fenceposts,  
at stars falling without his permission  
into distant fields. He could not hear  
himself when the night flared  
over the footsteps  
of the lone prowler.

His doggy heart swelled,  
cankerous, in his silky breast.  
He found himself on the street  
with an inexplicable desire.

There you have it, a seeming explanation  
for the dog still attached  
to my ankle. I've grown used to it, moving  
this way, dragging it now with a certain  
affection over the cobbles, over  
these words daring you  
to mention it.

I know the operation you're thinking of,  
the one where I give up  
part of my leg and go on  
with a slight impairment.

I could stop telling this story,  
invent a wound  
so terrible, so beneficial  
you would spend the rest of your life  
helping me get over it.

## **SHELTER**

You would not turn back  
once that meadow had entered  
like a face with nowhere left  
to go. We found you that day  
stumbling in the hedge. The gun  
shattered again the plaster, a sky  
he proved would fall.

You thought his head was blasted  
on the porch. A cloud  
hung in your arms  
for days, his corpse  
rattling the bushes, your:  
“Why won’t he come in?”

Those nights our welcome  
was un pitying, clean sheets,  
whispers when we thought you slept.  
“These angels,” you said once,  
your hand shadowed in the car lights  
on the wall. “They always  
want something back.”

## LOVE STORY

*"The waterfall does not marry the wolf."*  
Indian Legend

Her hair has turned  
to water. Kept or gone to  
she might empty with the air, with  
the mountain, its blood, its separations  
carried into hiding. What could she wear out  
besides a life?

The sides of arrows or ribs broken  
across the woodsman's horse  
meant what wasn't understood could still be  
significant, caves not emptied  
by conclusions nor dread  
of the mountain, the wolf  
lingering in the knot of pines. His  
heart of straw, his sheep's  
clothing wrapped around him to fail  
and charm in failing that disguise.

Even the mountain owes stillness  
to the sky. So the ribs  
are to the blood, and the heavy flesh  
of her side to each caress.  
The sound of water  
in one place. "Let me. Let me."

Already the wings ruffling his lips.

## THE FIRE

We sat by a house on fire. I  
was sitting, was  
with you. You,  
stopped by this fire  
as a woman stops by a mirror  
to step in. You  
stepped in. The fire

looked out of you. I  
think it had a face like yours,  
the one so full of remorse.  
What was it I was saying  
to you? I  
was sitting with you  
and the fire moved toward us  
in little gasps and barks.

Your upper arm, white  
as shark's belly. Dancers  
broke and gathered in the round  
of it. An animal glow  
in the nest of your hair. Again  
to be coming back  
from the remembered first light  
in ordinary clothes  
into the flesh of the human day.