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Letter Via Stars

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and *ah's* from those of us who glimpse her oh-
so-recently tossed hair and think of the possible
poses in which he tossed it, no doubt entering
his name upon the deepest ledger of her body where it would
count, or so we think she must have told him as she bent
above him saying *now yes now* and he digs like a mole for the
root

he thinks he left in her, and makes their small boat rock, nearly
uproot
the anchor. On the prow the lady remains a tightlipped hero.
The boat tosses with their motions and the lady bends
like the stirrer in the drink the man just bought the woman. It's
possible
they'll go on like this. Probably the wooden
lady will stay mute. Tomorrow they'll sail on, anchor, do what's
called *love* and then enter

—enter what?—a harbor bar? the “world”? with the same heroic
motions. At each watering-place along their watery route, she'll bend
and make her entrance through his proscenium wood arm. *See, their
bodies say, how love's nightliness is possible?*

LETTER VIA STARS

How hard it must have been for you—no roof, no body overhead—
how hard to learn to count by counting stars.

And how hard it will be when you outlive them all,
since they were born, and so have life-spans, star-

spans. So do the whirls born in different hemispheres—
one like sand, one like black earth—

who would have been your parents. I
am writing for us both, you know that.

I think that you are going to be a fine cartographer,
how else could we have found you in each other?

Last night, he taught me, your almost-father,
if I tie a string to Orion's right shoulder

and follow to its end in the steady wind that rises
when the stars put on their names and sweep forward to be counted,

I will see an eddy of snow, a faint balloon.
I think it is the galaxy

where certain children go
to live out their first lives;

it's full of smaller pinwheels and a sweet wind
to wheel them so the ones who have no lungs

can use instead the breath of the world—
the big world, the forgiving one.

QUINTET FOR FLUTE AND STRINGS

For years I've been sad
over somebody you didn't know,
somebody who walked the earth
while you did, but so what. Today
you gave me a little piece of music
you have written for the flute—
the flute I learned to play
so long before the angel
was given his assignment
to come down and uproot
the garden of my heart—
and when I looked at it I saw