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Perdita in the Back Room

Zona Teti

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Four Poems · *Zona Teti*

PERDITA'S SUNDAY

Winds come down under the moon
untouched in its water-veil.

The lower world of shutter and door
shakes like a family tree,
noisy as a whirl of dropped leaves.

Seeing deepens to a wound when you find
how alone always you were, Family
a heavy ghost to keep you in line
but when you stretched a hand
out to it, your fist went through.

Anger flutters like dead spirits
in a tree. But you live. Your blood bathes
the wound, that blood salted from the first sea,
brine to eat deeper each time you see.

PERDITA IN THE BACK ROOM

Darkness comes to the door to show you
what you have. Well-manured hurts.
Roots firm as hate.

How can anyone find the sword
with magic in its cut when this wood
is so tangled, intricate as history?

One brush leaves blood in a string of beads
more irritating than wool.

Sleeping Beauty is that rag of soul
dangling in the twigs.

If those thorns are to bloom,
the kiss must come from herself.

Anyone else who tries will be turned
into her twin
easily laid by a spindle.

What can persuade her to self-love?
Fairness. But she leaves it out
so she can have her canopy of thorns.

PERDITA IN A LARGE WORLD

The tower window gaped like a mouth,
and birds flew to nests in the tower throat.
The river died, passing through a dead boat.
All dead, within sight of the sea
where other streams poured out their guts,
and boats flashed like sun on the water.
The wind was dead, so I moved here
like a wind, pushing flowers to their heads.

He knelt as if he could raise the stems again.
I did want to trust that sign of soul,
a botanical Christ, but he gave no sigh
when he killed the dogs for their plain speech.
I looked down so he could not see my eyes.
I wanted to leave but did not know how,
kept at the source of stink with no wind,
only the bird clatter of throats and wings.