PINE TO SOUND
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Echo’s Voice

barefoot and stricken and stumbling
I stutter when you ask at your very
command all the same I let ferocity
creep in at the edges I bark and bawl
until I’m hoarse and irrelevant ready
to slip back into the dark hollow
my throat this is waiting and
won’t you just say it this is muddled
desire repeating itself turning bone
to stone to air to silence spine and
hip my square collarbone when
did we become only sharp and
shattered utterance fierce signals
in the shifting center wings waves pages
perhaps it would be better to stop
here to quit before nothing is left but
soaring cruel and compelling come in
we continue we splinter we slide
in treacherous sequence echo speaks
first return returning refrain resounding
voice voice voice and oh how I listen
Morning Provisional

It might collapse at any moment, the room; might come apart at the seams. Drifts in mist in rain; wind shook everything, almost shook everything loose. A man on the radio says vulnerability assessment says gap analysis. Or he calls: years-away voice. Tilting precarious above the street. Carry on at late morning coffee, hover over the paper, tabled. Already it’s clear how each story ends. Trees knock branches to glass; wasps let themselves in without asking. And letters pile by the door in luminous envelopes. There is fracture and there is repair. Call or letter; riddle or time machine. Weeks of storm and uncertainty and now splintering sun delivered through clouds. A bell, a cue, the hinge in the narrative. Where pieces came together. The phone might be an instrument of desire or a means of containment; a letter might be a compass. When it turns back on itself like this, the sky says look away; pretend the end is not upon you.
Talking Points

Wasps through the crumbling casement, droning and sudden, like riddles spilling from gaps between ribs;

well-dressed walls mimic they camouflage they telescope: plaster split open where the nails went in;

and again and always you plot by suggestion you parallel you shimmer bright you eventually you finally give way;

photograph of a trim and toothless jungle, unkept promise of a wild atmosphere—how it cuts me decisively loose;

nevertheless you continue, you calculate axis and distance and revolution in minutes in hours (there is no other way);

then evening finds us (oxygen blooming storm black and heaving threat); it owns what we said to the last sentence:

in this room and certain others fists of lightning break open and rain falls in fervent curtains when I close the door behind me.
Conflagration

All at once. What do they say? One fell swoop. All my pretty ones. You take it in. I remember the conflagration and your causal interest in the ashes. Hush before the blaze; crisp instant demanding heat. Then I recognized your ambition. Trap carefully laid; so far and wide the days that devised it. In this moment, in our private nostalgia for Tuesday, we weary, we reach, we want with might to shatter. Flames confirm our sense that something was about to happen. Is about to happen. More. Daily anticipation. All the same that iridescent, that instantaneous. And more. Embers smolder and smoke, ignite. And still here we are both breathing. Even wrecked, the boundaries mark something. I haven’t forgotten what your eye can do.
On Hearing Voices

The hand and what we catch hold of. Point always to the far edge. And the story of bones perfectly and cleanly broken. Now the clear blue context rushes, slips through, spilling away in streams in swift rivulets.

—— ——

Once-familiar sound, distinct and distant as bells at the hour.

This recognition, this broken-lung return finds every patience in the living body. Fills even the otherwise agreeable mouth.

—— ——

The dead keep talking, each syllable churns and grinds, persuasive as axel and singing gears, steady as a machine.

—— ——
Empty apartment where moss
and mushrooms grow green-black and
brown in the decay of the refrigerator.

Tree limbs break in, reaching.
   The final crumbling
is hastened by even the smallest noises
setting down their unbearable weight.

— —

Time has fingers
like knives. Talking
and not harmless;
the ghost at the edge
of everything.

And the nervous system crackling.
Fray

my suspended second story
tilts keen and madly swaying
wild a ship’s transom untethered
this is winter so like a tear
a worn patch in the fabric
skin showing through
the day endures tangle
bears consequence and the room
the lopsided room ready
to crack open wide this is
winter unraveling and if I am
almost pinned by skeletal light
by cross-pane shadows the hour
at least is set steady stretched
tight and unyielding by sure strokes
cast slender those dark dark threads