PRODIGAL

Here is a grief grown white as the moon tonight,
so round with yearning
                your mother has no more words.

She will not say she has come alone to the shore again
to draw something from the dark echo of waves—

some memory of you as a boy with impossibly small hands.
You with hair that will not part. You curled in the space
between bodies like a small bulb of light.

Not how you left, so awkward and pained,
your want as deep as the fear in your knees,
as the regret in the hollowed bones beneath your skin

or that betraying hand, the one that trembled at your side
by the last needle wound. Your eyes now as still as pebbles
laid in the river bed with no memory of mountains or shores.

She cannot say hell, cannot whisper God,
or even the grave and its diligent worms. What is belief then?
What is faith? If she lets these go, what then?

We want what we cannot see, the other face of the moon,
the one missing. The one turned away at this precise moment.

We want to see, but it is dark in here, in the small narrow world.
It is dark always, then someone opens a door.
Then another. Then another.

There are more rooms than two in the world beyond.
Somewhere her son is sleeping.

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