

Simon Perchik

Branching out and this hillside
bit by bit unraveling
the way your shadow keeps to itself

just by darkening, fed the dirt
you once could see through
as if nothing was there to hum

then swallow some old love song
that came into the world
facing the ground still trying

to leave you and night after night
you listen for these smaller
then smaller stones eating alone

as the cry forever struggling
from its harsh stranglehold
to keep up, side by side and stay.

Afraid and the wall
follows behind though you
point, know all about

descent and hammer blows
as the distant cry from home
—you sift between

as if this ready-mix
no longer cares about stone
broken open against one finger

retracing some caress
lost and the others
with no end to it.

As if by yourself the harness
half branches, half marble
struggling to slow the moss

and around both shoulders
the crowd envies such a strength
–a fake! what they don’t see

is the iron bit that’s vaguely green
though it’s your jaws not these gates
that cannot move without you

–a belonging and yet this mold
is always in bloom, holding on
to one winter more

that needs flowers
the way all mourners kneel
and underneath the snow

look for a wagon not from wood
breaking down in front its fragrance
and where you stopped for water.

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Just by reaching in –this sore
is heated though your arm
covers it the way moonlight

can’t hold on any longer
lets some hillside pour over it
and mornings too grow huge

count the nights from so far off
and each other –you collect
enter each room deeper and deeper

careful not to shake the walls
–on tiptoe so nothing falls
takes root bent over a table

warmed by these small rocks
to follow you, shut half by the stench
half on their own, one by one.

You think it's cramps
though certainly this dirt
resembles her voice

and no one here but you
pours from a bowl, sure
it's laced, opens out

sickens your step by step
-for a while they're quiet
washed in front her grave

though your mouth is tighter
swollen, surrounded by inches
no longer dry or empty.