

Kristina Marie Darling

From: Dark Horse (C&R Press, 2018)

## GODSPEED

Our train was the first to leave. My formulation of the question, a small bird splayed on the tracks. Now the memory of the memory of a landscape. That sheet of ice holding everything in place. The felled tree the telephone wires an entire snow-covered field. The car and its passengers. Yes. There is an elegance to the way one strikes a match. Line of smoke against a reflection of the shore, the little sea as it darkens. Each of the flowers lit as if from the inside.

## FACTS ABOUT THE SHORE

The whole time we're speaking, your other wife traces figures in the sand. Little hourglass atop Rousseau's desk, logic and its raptures. How cold the light is as it strikes the coast. The insides of the flowers have gone dark and now their mouths are frozen shut. Dear \_\_\_\_\_, dear impossibility, dear husband, this is your atoll. A low sky murmurs just above us and none of the ships will ever make it back to the dock. Snow falls on the other wife, on your small white boat, on the ice. When you look away from the ocean, I do my best to hold still. I try to ache more beautifully.

## SAD FILM (WITH SUBTITLES)

The first scene was nearly untranslatable. Velocity and the little ache at the very back of the throat. Were we seeing a design in the narrative when all that was *really* there was the hand on the waist, the movement of a white dress in the middle distance:

And for once they traveled to a country that spoke another language entirely, without so much as a miniature dictionary to lessen the shock. To lose that thread the moment the wind picks up, to no longer be able to trace the progress of an idea, or the line that reason makes in the hot white sand, was to somehow always be on holiday. Still, they both had to wonder what the gatekeeper thought of them, their mouths that empty, not even a cough to break the silence.