

from *SENTENCE*

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I hope to get by without knowing what we don't
love: here is everything not clanging inside
our cupped hands: wife with her evening cries
children red from the sirens, a circle of conclusions told
to quiet down, a few coins to the side of the statistic
The dog-air roaming through tenements is a man
who builds his house in yours & leaves the key in
the knob The time he held his answer to your neck

he calls a joke What is this hollow that gleams in our eyelids
& worries skin off our lips? Whose heft catches
in my throat There's a name outgrows the dots
on the map, shrouds with tarp the AM radio, & makes
stand on hind legs the stupid in me Brow to jaw, his face
gives mine meaning: every day I rehearse its

certainty, my love for his
in the ampules I keep as close as my liver Above all he loves
his might when in my veins slides his light & intercedes

We claim the space where light falls least, we wait
 for our conviction to match the hyperbole, the blessed
 lie that thrashes in its cage of never-again, quiets down
 as it knows it's alone, barks when it hungers
 —don't we understand it needs to be fed
 we who push you away every last minute, mouthing
 we didn't think this through, it hurts too much
 when all we maybe want is for you to be enraged, gift us

with the harm we've convinced ourselves we're owed
 distilling more darkness out of darkness, out of
 turning away with the hope of being rewarded for it
 out of not so much resentment or even sacrifice
 but something from you without a name & therefore
 we're irredeemable: don't we deserve this affliction

the kind we've turned to
 for comfort &, on days when there's nothing else
 but the noise we make & don't hear enough of, pleasure?

What about the prayers we hold for no
 reason, prayers that when pressed against your
 ear recall the impassive traffic of
 the ocean What about the hero's will
 that falls into the plot, his flight an ending
 you've hot-glued onto his back What about
 the stranger, his blood running true into
 the gutter, its nest of cellophane What

 about his wife with the blisters that keep
 leaking milk What about the man who demands
 you swallow his anger, what about his
 smirk once you do What about despair &
 how it glitters the street, & what about
 the pictures that fulfill your screen, their baggage

 of words & thrown-to
 wrath What about the visionary's face
 of redemption, how does it hollow
 the way he stabs his
 resolve into ripe air, how does it trouble
 this news, what in it must you preserve when
 it's not from your life
 Must this day be what cracks off my face What
 about, should it please you: revolution

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