

Ordinary Light

Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

One hour of a particular day,
like a sudden flu it descends upon you
the first time.

You could not have known.

It wasn't in the plan.

You were in love,
doing too much right.

You knew how to please—
the common skills of cooking,
living anywhere he took you,
making love. But

after those extravagant
nights on the steps,
the warm bulb of the moon
outweighing its stained eggshell,
it happens—

the one you love
disappoints.

You are never quite the same.

The slivered scars,
the errors left to fondle,
and you learn how to plant a hedge of caution,
to expect some sunny morning
a dread to enter unannounced,
a mute to keen the birdsong.

You go about your job unsurprised
when spilled garlic garbles the stew,
when the flame nasturtiums dim,
when the faithful cat cannot be found.

As for him, from this day on
he must be satisfied
to be seen in ordinary light.