

Elegy / Prayer

Conner Bassett

whatever I say I keep alive
keeping you you near
me to the point of me

never near enough here
am either lost or lost am

losing you again speaking
if speaking could find
you if you could be found



summoned in visible earshot
sounds of winter like water
tunneling through the body
reduced to an ear, a window
through which the trees, like

bony chandeliers, migrate
quietly away, meaning up
as if listening to the sky
as if listening itself might
be a destination



nearer the edge of here
the body becomes
reduced to its ear

how a child hears blood
inside her cupped hand
believing she hears
an ocean, and once
I was a child you
spoke to me once and
since was memory now

say something or vanish



falls the snow making
the buildings even taller
like a mind not mine amid
its own racket redundantly
mounting amounting
to snow for hours

I wait the day-faded star
nearly deniable nearly
once spoken no longer
belongs to anyone
say something



a shadow falls from what
it fails to copy suddenly
a fact made weightless

all about the world the world
people are dying lovers
at dinner tell each other
plans to make plans

what we cannot contain
we inhabit



but the ear also echoes
itself a world next to
nothing to hear
is a subtraction so
and so follows the call

it subsumes called
memory what we lose
to recover later a world
and word to displace
a clarity I cannot trust

carry with me



drifting snow locates
dislocates the landscape it

touches becoming the object
of its own description
the imagination craves

a ghost to be heard, to hear it
the unseen bird replays
its rusty gate, its nervous music
not quite music

a faucet drips all morning
television blue



where I am not where
I call out what others call

prayer, there is no arrival
it startles me—the wall

the way whatever I touch
overtaken by what I want

touches back



thinking through the keyhole
I am nearly but not quite
alone, no such quiet
as long as blood runs
and runs though the body

caught in surrender
in its own unrest—a breath
at the center of the room
still moving



I resemble too much
the egg to eat now
an emptiness so simple so
being idle draws out
the residual walls
an afterlife of paper I want

to hear you as I am heard
returns to me the fact of me
what I wanted not
to become become again

ungainly being I am