

Richard Harrison

Poem for a Crescent Moon

“I come to you on bended light.” There’s a poem I’m in no position to write, the rhythm tight as a sonnet and me no artist of escapes. “I come to you on bended light” I write after a morning spent letting time flow through my day like water through a layer of buried stones, but I have nothing to say that isn’t simply the setting for a darling gem, and a poem has to be more than that, much more. I want the rhythm back from the scheduled drought of the day, the thrum and pulse of words that follow each other like a herd of elephants seen from the air along a path that only they can see, a path they trust with every ounce of a million pounds of life. You can feel them, moving, words like elephants over dusty earth, words for the way I love you, words for the ordinary glass of water on my desk, words for death and mourning and judgment and philosophy, words moving slowly over the question of my fingertips spread over your thigh while you’re driving. We’re not doing anything but moving in a machine designed to put whole countries a day’s journey from one another, but still, my hand is across your thigh and it means everything to us, the ease of that one gesture. My fingers are spread out like I’m playing an octave with one hand. You are in control of the car. The miles roll under us, the road is Aristotle’s dream of road, every mile the same as every other. I am writing you who feels me touching your leg and sees me out of the corner of your eye where the light is curved; my face is in the perimeter of the lens, a crescent moon where it is every face I have ever had at once, and I’m thinking now that love is a kind of refracting mirror that only the silver behind the glass can truly be said to see.