

Often I Forget Your Voice

Often I forget your voice
even though I think myself listening.
I hear the trees rattling the night wind.
The deathwatch beetle tocks behind the board and batten wall.
Water drips a metronome cadence from the brass faucet and I forget.
Many summers have I lain on the warm concrete drive to stare up at the unaltered stars
for so long I can mark their wheeling course— Orion rising, crossing, hiding behind the
treeline— and deceived myself that I had become
your familiar.

Morning dew glistening,
me yawning, stretching feline in the half-light then smiling in smug mistaken wisdom.
She is long awake, the smells of coffee and bacon stealing forth to mock the lazy pilgrim
his complacent prayers.

The headline announces the hundreds dead,
the thousand lives brought low without warning.

Perhaps there is a shudder as I realize how cursory
my sympathy has become, how artlessly I glance upon the photographs,
or maybe not. In either case, the grim news solicits my sinful memory.

Forgive me, Mother, for my attention has faltered. I came to think your music was sung for
me.

Forgive me, and lead me to becoming
an instrument. Pale Moon, may I ride with you, will you ever trust me now
to raise my sail to the tide and not the time?

Cricket sounds fill the evening windows.

The ink has dried on the nib of my costly pen and I nap unknowing. But in my grateful dreams the rocks grind as the earth tears itself;

cyclones flatten deserted islands; lightning blinds the unwarned pilgrim.

