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COME TAKE THESE WORDS FROM ME

Once, through my town, there were rivers.
Thin trees rippled along the spillways.
Morning pierced our breath. Two doves
On the rail bobbing their heads. I am,
My ghost, alone. I stand where there is
No water, thinking water. The laws of nature
Determine all the grief one eye can hold.
Thistles were his winding sheet, my father.
Did he go smooth and gentle? You bum,
What cruder diction than loss?
Though the great pine shove
Taproots down and call the black dirt
Home, though rivers still run,
Though sickly, though this town is not my town,
I wander. Our saws are sharp and never idle long
And through the day we feed the fires
And transform the field-jumble into lines.
Far faces bleared by fire, who are you
That the bright mares of language stride forth
Their flames? I am never more than this.
A green mind in a green world,
And yet the kingdoms that come to my ear.
I look out and know my place.
I, because of love.
In this, there is no recourse.
In this I am humble.
If seeds be language, let them gather.
Let them take these words.

A SIGH FOR AVILA

Soft thump of chickadees against the pane
Brings me round. Come water,
Surge water, pour back down, making the mind
Dampen with the past.
Grackle will grackle, no matter, the sun
And weeds, our lovely strangers
Will come to us with love.
All hours and all ripeness
Go fallow when you speak.
The world turns upon your cog
For we are twigs
Of another weather
And when morning comes back round
To dank and feral moors,
Seed grass will settle bright
Across loam. Pale beeches clatter,
I'm left alone. Old pines swoon—
That is the wind. The far wall
Is spackled with the ruin of a prior home.
Someday, in a dream of cattails
I'll return. No castles,
No maiden flaming through the night—
The final days are tempting.
There was a beginning, but where?
I write letters to the unseen—
Let me shut mine eyes. Come water
And peel our blood from my hands.
I am walking. I am roaming.
I fling the dead before me.
Do you mean, little sister,
That we are abandoned,
And one?