

Simon Perchik

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You sleep on one side though it's the bed
reaching out for a pillow
where a heart should be –what you hear

is darkness being made
the way everything in this room is leaving
as corners thrown to their death

–no, there's no smoke, just the steady
night after night returning alone
as if it once was a fire

had a name that was lost
–its ashes each evening
calling to her from the half that's hers.

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And though this cup is shabby
you still tinker with the rim
–some daylight is needed :polish

could restore the slow turn
that's sacred, fill it the way dirt
softens the Earth with your fingertips

–needs the smell from an embrace
that once was wood, lets you grieve
by leaning over as if this bottom

stopped circling for broken teeth
for the handle that's missing
a place in your mouth.

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Single file the way every stone
promises its last dance to the dead
who listen for beginners :small stones

a mourner leaves –in the dark
your grave more than the usual
smelling from an old love note

whose words you have forgotten
died all at the same time
as moonlight :a silence

you could hold in your hand
–you think it’s the rain that stopped
though you are entitled to a tree

left here by its shade setting out
to fill itself with you, become a night
where there was none before.

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You are no longer the smoke, reach out
the way ashes know all about sunlight
and falling back –not any more the evening

for hours growing fat on air and water
and stone that weighs too much
–you are the afternoon coming from behind

with both eyes closed –it’s the darkness
that’s in the way between your arms
and the last kiss to bring them closer

on fire –push! face to face against the Earth
not used to a hillside that’s not final
is lowering itself for your shadow and later.

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This stone was never in love
though you are now its Spring
–where there was no one before

you bring it rain, grass
and one by one an afternoon
no longer the hammer blows

it returned from –you send it
pieces, edges, embraced
in the dirt that lasts forever

wants to become a sea again
and this stone spreading out
with you in its arms, naked

then whole –was never so new
soft and against your forehead
here the flowers will close.

Simon Perchik is an attorney whose poems have appeared in *Partisan Review*, *Forge*, *Poetry*, *Osiris*, *The New Yorker* and elsewhere. His most recent collection is *The Osiris Poems* published by box of chalk, 2017. For more information, including free e-books, his essay titled “Magic, Illusion and Other Realities” please visit his website at www.simonperchik.com.