

Palette

Names with no faces events out of the blue
neighborhoods once familiar simply gone except for occasional mention
in these long explanations for excruciating choices
made with no consequences but more unmailed letters

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Dead. All dead.
She who danced a pink moth in the moonlight.
He a lynx who paced the ward.
The light gone from their eyes.
What was animate merely carnal.
Then nothing

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And how so young and O so cocksure
first person singular plural possessive
propositions laced with quotes as if he were
answering essay questions or talking to himself
but love declared on page after page of manic characters
insisting on something and something more

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I could of course claim I never intended any such thing
and all that nonsense of mytho-freudian significance
simply a ruse to get you past the point of reference.
Bloody tower be damned. As I recall it was a ditch
that flowed and various creatures with more or fewer limbs
passing along the only edge that mattered anymore
crumbling into that liquidity every time one of them
or one of us lowered itself head first down the bank
to try to quench the thirst all of us suffered

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Burnt-out tenements of the poetry wars
fought for reasons nobody knows
gap-toothed reminders of old stories
shadowed against remains of another day

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All that piss and vinegar
intellectual ecstasy
verbal flexibility
ex-lovers foregone illusions
ghosts of a chance
to what end?
Delicate wings in hard shells
yellowing around the edges

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And the snake we meet on the walk
is not the one we would rather meet
but a head square as a fist, eyes
cold as stars under the knuckle