

Two Poems

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When the reality is immoveable,
resistance and acquiescence are words
for futile. Not to see can almost be borne,
not this shadowing feeling—not being seen.
More and more I feel the shared gaze
still known in memory proves existence
as nothing else can, proves us human.
So many faces are gone, even his
that was mine. Telling a bedtime story
to Thomas, I hear him reach for a switch
and announce, Thomas needs light,
Da only needs the dark. I have tried
to answer the question of consolation.
Today my answer is rain: hearing rain.

When Away

For the dark beneath you, say *sea*.
Above you, dark. *Sky, sky* . . .

Your dark boat.

The known stars
to keep your course by.



You were a boy. Hardly. A baby.
Your father held you at the shoulders.
You waded in tidal pools
studying what circled your ankles.
Mussels. Unnameables. Urchins.

Wind suffusing the water: never stillness.

And the sand harsh with shells.



You'd say *mother*: one was there.
You'd say *father*: one was there.

There were *palms*, there were *storms*.

Love, fear.

There was nothing
there wasn't a word for.



If the fish you net
taste sweet, you're near

a river, near rest, some small
restful shore.

Countless, the islands that are
not the island
you set out for.

♦

In the dream, you leaned over the prow
and, instead of your reflection, saw shadow.

♦

Days out, the idea of days lay
lies sunken on the sea floor.

Lifted anchor
tense was.

Vanished tailwind
that was tense.

Your sunlit body barely
a weight in the boat.

Creak of the wood like a proof of the world.

How like shipwreck, the safe floating, yours, over surfaces.

How the idea of days
lay or lies.

♦

What returns the world?

It could be

specks of white
out ahead

remaining, becoming

the gliding
of terns, closer

some sureness in their bodies
crying shore.

Not yet seen yet sure
as anything.

Open-mouthed stare.

The world, the world

no cry you can utter.

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