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Neck of the World

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HIBERNACULA

A scrap of river glints
its one long diamond of sleep
and the bear turns outward,
believing the water full of mirrors.
Buoyant as stars, his paws
search the slip and heft of rock
and my hands stroll the bed
like minstrels, kneeling now
and then to clench the sheets.
The house-scent carries over the hills,
downstream the moon burns
its coral stuffing in the river glass.
Into the woods the bear becomes
darkness hedged by darkness,
an undoing of pines into
their own dominion. Awake,
my hands rear up, cut and bruised
on slate, skittish as a team of horses
catching the scent of an animal
that approaches, searching out a lair.