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Neck of the World

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MANE AND CLAW

My dear sisters: how the scent
of half-life spins continual
from our voices like talk,
and the body carnival dumbs

down to calcite: reflective
segments of hair and nail
in us. When the sink drains
the first of me to hear it

is my stomach—the rust
flying through me like sparrows,
weird marrow nearly dead,
the goat-mask of factory work.

What is stolen from one is
stolen still from another. What
lows in the murk wants, wild and
staring, to pull us enjoyably down.

The fact of night is such:
it breaks. The fact of women
and men is this: the struggle out.
And the struggle out: it breaks.