Necessary Light

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It is one of those middle days, where nothing is necessary, but I’ve a compulsion to get things down and hold them: a hollow wooden loon on a coffee table, the twin crescent rolls of breakfast, light as last night’s moon.

*Dictation is the alphabet of light,* a woman writes on her forearm. I, myself, have encoded the notes of the air on napkins, and have had hefty conversations with a man in a booth at the Blue Benn Diner—thick words, and a slice of apple pie.

The journal of the days here might dissolve quickly when I leave and never be remembered, like old news going up in the library’s fireplace, taking with it the song of language I have been playing.

The man I was speaking of earlier sinks into the leather chair. We read poems to each other. I ask him if he believes we can take our words with us undiminished.

For now, I want to drown out all life beyond here. This stopping place astonishes and delights: the phone in the closet, the playbills, the way every new thing takes pleasure in the sheer unfolding of itself.

I want to bring it back to me—this space and time—after I’m home again, call it back whenever I want to. I will walk off with it, like the silent thief who strides off with all the gold on the dresser.

These things I’ll keep: stars shaking at the web of tree branches, pans clattering in the kitchen, late talk, the light of the woman downstairs who writes all night—who can never sleep—and the church carillon next door which chimes its Vespers each evening, the song lasting long after the bells stop ringing.