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Cruelty Made Me

Love came along and said what: What?
without even a single word.
Said wait by the far side of the river
and when by the black limb of the crow tree
growing through my kitchen window.

Love came along and said let me
(and let me say she’d let me)
but cruelty made me
with my back turned. Grew me
according to a twisted line of light
so I’ve grown twisted, like the light,
shaped
like a staircase
and run with a long red rug.

Love came along and flashed me her badge,
said her name rhymes with test
and keeps to the meter of bare legs
in a loose dress. But cruelty made love sleepless
and sleepless, made me cruel:
each tooth in the tracks
of all my zippers latched, belts all
buckled and button
by button, I’m done.