

undoing

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at night i braid my hair and unbraid it again.
the butterfly outside my bedroom window
folds itself back into a caterpillar.
the chrysalis consumes it whole.
how can i fall asleep when
every breath that exits my body is
shaped like undoing?
i am hungry for belonging.
your greeting hangs suspended and heavy.
somewhere, my present is half
a second behind yours;
the earth cannot make its way toward us;
i have not yet become accustomed to heartache.
i wait until after i become alone
to decide i no longer want to be lonely.
i unbraid my hair and bite my fingernails
until the tips of my fingers sting and bleed.
how can i sleep when there is the opportunity
to count the woven threads of my pillowcase?
here is what i see:
something crawling around inside my stomach.
the sun coming up dull from the wrong horizon.
this is easy for me now. i find revival
slow and stifling. i no longer feel the need
to prove my suffering or to feel more pain
than the child who has accidentally let go of a balloon.
this morning, i wake heavy, then numb.
i wake alone. i have learned the essence of absence:
it is hole-shaped and hungry. it is not merciful.
i am being eaten alive.