kevin clark

The Assignment

How long ago had she demanded I walk without her the length of one evening, my assignment written on the black sky: A haunting, I was to repeat her name as I walked the pitch circuit. There would be no other test. A single name, the erotic vocable my only companion. Breathafter-name-filled breath, not even dry leaves spoke beneath my shoes. Days beneath my shoes, weeks. Soon, the sea change. Nerves splayed in silence from my step, rays on the invisible plain. Did I hover on the bouyant, salted sea, a skinless body? I grew weightless, like a pioneer come to measure the distance of his soul under the lightless dome of the deprivation tank. Years swept by like protons, white shards on silver. Once you enter the pinhole, she warned, space expands like a womb. Do you want this, she warned. I aspired in air, my breath no longer her name. I was a possession, a word-sheath. I was the infinite next. In the next town a caution light matched my chant. The word as inversion, as changeling. I followed, as if on a road. As if homeward.

FOR POETRY

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