

The Other Side

By Jennifer Elise Foerster

POETRY OUT LOUD 

My crown.
My room.
Surrounding snow.

These are not my
hands, my winter shoes
carried off by uncertain music.

There was a meadow
behind my house
and if I should see myself there
she would tell me
there was never a meadow

and then walk through me
as if through a cloud
and carry on in her own
solitary direction.

Crows still caw
in her palace garden—
tram rails, rain,
stammering moon.

Once lilacs bloomed
their huge white knuckles
breaking the winter of my room—

it was a dream—French windows
on a Viennese street.

Every street I cross
angling alongside
smoggy postwar artifices

branches scratch
against my sleep.

How my body was a branch
in my sleep.

And when I woke
years later
I peered down upon it
leafless and stiff.

No roosts left, no caw.
No birds blooming
in my dream's green crooks.

Afternoons alone
are labyrinthine.
I wander the city, searching
for what? Friends,
we knew where to find each other,
tapping the window of the winter room.

We were thinner then,
younger than the chestnut trees.

Everything has its seed
much later
and on the other side of time.

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