

By W. S. Merwin

Comet of stillness princess of what is over  
high note held without trembling without voice without sound  
aura of complete darkness keeper of the kept secrets  
of the destroyed stories the escaped dreams the sentences  
never caught in words warden of where the river went  
touch of its surface sibyl of the extinguished  
window onto the hidden place and the other time  
at the foot of the wall by the road patient without waiting  
in the full moonlight of autumn at the hour when I was born  
you no longer go out like a flame at the sight of me  
you are still warmer than the moonlight gleaming on you  
even now you are unharmed even now perfect  
as you have always been now when your light paws are running  
on the breathless night on the bridge with one end I remember you  
when I have heard you the soles of my feet have made answer  
when I have seen you I have waked and slipped from the calendars  
from the creeds of difference and the contradictions  
that were my life and all the crumbling fabrications  
as long as it lasted until something that we were  
had ended when you are no longer anything  
let me catch sight of you again going over the wall  
and before the garden is extinct and the woods are figures  
guttering on a screen let my words find their own  
places in the silence after the animals

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Source: *The Vixen* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1996)