

C A R R I E E T T E R

*The Trapeze Artist's
Dear John Letter*

I recede like a vanishing point on my ribboned trapeze
and trust hamstring and calf's steady marriage
when I hang from my knees.

Physics can name the force that brings the bar back again.
I'd call it *Fortune's wheel* or *Tantalus's fruit*,
but then I'm the company tragedienne

as all good trapeze artists are. I no sooner arrive than leave.
I love you, I'm quitting you. I live my life between
the two meanings of cleave.

Almost

No amount of clamour will make her leave.
Her ears exist only as a genetic plan,
a dependable promise of her DNA,
though perhaps the pulp of her vibrates
with strong waves of sound.

No pleas, however delivered,
can entice her voluntary exit.
Whatever we believe about the soul,
we suppose consciousness requires
at least months, if not also the kiss of air.

You need not clamour nor plead, dear one.
I myself will reply with our regrets.
I myself will sing the first and last lullaby.
Almost will be the only name
she ever has.