

OLD HOME



Anne Carson

SLEEPCHAINS

Who can sleep when she—
hundreds of miles away I feel that vast breath
fan her restless decks.
Cicatrice by cicatrice
all the links
rattle once.
Here we go mother on the shipless ocean.
Pity us, pity the ocean, here we go.

GOLD

Your painknots I hear, the verb I cannot get. The verbs are going.
Glossy.
So they go.
Scraping a bit.
Yes, off on a cruise
to the rosy cross.
Solvite corpora as the alchemists say,
et coagulate spiritum.
Making gold is just a sideline for us, isn't it Mother.
Wounds are the light.
All that singing!

NOTHING FOR IT

Your glassy wind breaks on a shoutless shore and stirs around the rose.

Lo how

before a great snow,

before the gliding emptiness of the night coming on us,

our lanterns throw

shapes of old companions

and

a cold pause after.

What knife skinned off

that hour.

Sank the buoys.

Blows on what was our house.

Nothing for it just row.

HER BECKETT

Going to visit my mother is like starting in on a piece by Beckett.

You know that sense of sinking through crust,

the low black *oh no* of the little room

with walls too close, so knowable.

Clink and slow fade of toys that belong in memory

but wrongly appear here, vagrant and suffocated

on a page of pain.

Worse

she says when I ask,

even as (was it April) some high humour grazes

her eye—

“we went out rowing on Lake Como”—

not quite reaching the lip.

Our love, *that halfmad firebrand,*

races once around the room

whipping everything

and hides again.