

TERRA INCOGNITA

Love is the lonely planet gone so ecliptic she's hurling
herself into deep space orbit-starved she's after some lavish

gravity to tether her bones to some vernal hunger
to test against the stars their glitz blood-borne and erupting

animal down to the marrow *I said* she's so eager she
would do anything *What do we do* with our vixen snared

into rock our shard noir giving herself over to velocity
will the stars the night threading her body with dark matter

ever call her by name? *I want to tell you* a story which begins
and ends with love a planet shape-shifting around a body

disappeared once a painter once his horses constellating
the gesso of every pasture he bent to brush in hand

luminary beasts hardened by ribs a pelt slung across
dazed heat there was always a girl naked her eyes silky

with mascara but it all started with a mare thrusting her
muzzle into the shot gun window of his 1967 Chevy Nova

years ago Tulsa a whole afternoon of hooky in the field
off Route 66 by the high school picture the pitch undulant

with corn *can you see* his shoulders their raw glint startle
in the light *can you see* the girl still under him lit up

the mare's face in the window is a flash a sudden weapon
frizzed by mane she could use against them she could break

the young man reaching for her with a chump's swagger
crush his hands with her jaw she could bite the girl until her skin

swells blue then black *I want you to see* this image *I want you*
to really see it a girl so lovely it hurts to look at her a mare wild

enough to end everything a mane that smells like sex
prairie fire crickets so lush with smoke their bodies

seethe in the flare in the heat he'll learn to call this moment
some antediluvian fix some heart's undoing as if

to repeat the thing you most want will keep it holy the girl
will die in a fire *yes* in two years a cigarette will turn her

apartment to fissure then ash *yes* it is said love is a lonely
planet slipping across deep space in search of some longing

without end *So come*, let's walk the fields haunting its surface
they are blooming with lovers ready to make with their bodies

a world no supernova can turn to wreckage a world no magma
can glitter loosely to stone *listen* love may always chase

its next darkness but on its surface *my God* horses gallop
lunge their muscled heat into air