WHY I WRITE POETRY

An opal sea churned / in my cup. Waves closed / over the shores. // But this memory of salt salvaged my thirst— // like a skittish horse / bearing the scars / of its own blood / I rode // over thigh high hills / into mingled light. Apparition Wren’s opening poem, “At the Table of Longing,” though not labeled directly as such, is an ars poetica. It is also a slant declaration for why I write. The reasons for writing are as a raison d’être, and deeply intertwined with the nature of poetry itself.

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It’s never what you think exactly, what the flesh calls off, what is handled. When everyone is parts of me. And from me I am anyone whose been pushed. Most direct? My indirectness. Beautiful in the slow hurt witnessed down to the figure of my smaller slowness.

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Father’s too are pressed, they drive the dark wake in the after-life’s laboratory. Under small reading lamps, lead pencil’s scrawl angled silhouettes, images of a remembered geography. The metallic scent of stone strains their mouths. Once, I shelved my father’s dream when we met in the library corner. Our minds were two sunlit lakes stretched perfectly still. It might have been concrete, that frozen uniformity we prescribed to time.

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No more to be made. The greasy grass, the lean hill’s evolutions and altitudes; “the other,” whose magic pleases the working so that what one thinks the working actually extracts is some experimentation on misery or love.

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Beside, alone, are you what withstands cultivating or the moonlit river, snow blackened by the synchronized tongue of the current? There is a degree of belief I stand before. There is a flame-black linnet that drives twigs and roots thorough my casement. Swift refugee, your gloss mouth builds nests with an over-green sincerity.

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Wait where the water rasps. Unrepentant, the river resists the frost.

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The speaker’s glass hewn face is an accidental algorithm.

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I am seldom in the deep breath of this one’s body though I abide its house of air.
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Someone listens with a memory for listening. Someone holds the horizon’s photograph. Someone is swallowing brine, unfinished stars. Someone leans in the heirloom grass. Someone’s shadow thin gesture, the gaze of horses.

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You tell the specter there is something mineral in language, but failed at the center, with a mottled pattern streaked by the swizzle and distinction of the throat. You had not named it loose. A Eucharist, the color-blind ring of ghosts, they plead sometimes.