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Two Poems

by Corinne Manning

A Place in the Forest

After Tomas Tranströmer

Hospitals have a place here—your scent was made for them. I smell that saccharine spoiling on my fingers and know it's you, gowned and sweating the sheet with the window open. Like this. The wind shakes the doors, like a knocking. We call *come in, come in. Open it, you say, it sounds like knocking.* You worry. The nurses are always coming in and as you ease syrupy in and out of sleep I watch-dog you. They prick twist tangle the chords that connect you to the little machines.

It's beeping, I say, the blood's been drawn. He's nauseous hurry, no don't spin that. He's vomiting please. He's holding the plastic kidney, his glasses are slipping from his face. Touch him, no, there. Yes. Wait, there's been no food.

You wake and lines that crumple the crease of your neck spread and bulge. *Tell them, you say. What? You press a button, a machine sighs with you. Because this isn't prison and they call my name like it soon won't be mine.*

A Direction

Throats need water
water too needs itself
the same. The same gulping
way. Water needs.

Unlike you. the wet
absorbed by the line of chalk
between what you need and want.

The water pulls your hand to what's left.
Water needs. Give it your mouth. Lips to gravel.

Corinne Manning received her MFA from UNC Wilmington and her BA from Sarah Lawrence College. She's currently the writer-in-residence at the Hub City Writers Project.

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