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Alisa's Scars

Iryna Shuvalova

Uilleam Blacker

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Iryna Shuvalova translated by Uilleam Blacker

ALISA'S SCARS

scars alisa make a girl a girl
without scars you're a tabula rasa your battles
are not even begun and so are worse than lost your hands
without those bruises without those fine cuts are not hands
but birds' feet weak unable to hold onto anyone or anything

alisa
scars make a girl a woman
where it's thin that's where it tears alisa and where it heals and
where the blackness gets in and dwells in us like in the bowels of a stove
anxiety ferments in us
in dark jars a murky sleepless brew
whoever drinks it will wander oblivious laughing
tripping over their own shadow and crying
not daring to breathe without you alisa
but you but you

scars alisa make a girl a devil
a landslide a plague a hundred-headed hydra
a deus ex machina a roiling river in springtime
foam on the lips a rusty needle
a beast's yellow eye a beast's yellow fang
a long starless night
a whizz a hiss a curse

scars alisa
always hurt alisa