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Elegy for Falling

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Simone Muench & Jackie K. White

ELEGY FOR FALLING

Leaves, of course, whether it's their time or not,
and earrings gone in the throes of gyrations, whether
dance floor or back seat or that time I ran the tracks
down from the specter of being chased and turned

to face the ghost of my mother. I fell into the train's
shadow, was the shadow and the falling, the descent
and darkness, whether getting drunk in the bed
of a pick-up, clothes falling off with fervor, or hanging

up the strapless gown once the jazz riff also fell
off into the empty hall, notes scattered like a flat
here, a spiked heel there. Wandering was once
a kind of climbing, but every corner turned seemed

to telescope into a never-ending corridor, like a trope
in a horror film where the darkness collapses
into you even as the hallway stretches relentlessly
until you're in aerobic mode, tumbling through

facades and false eyelashes, also dropped on some
pillow, the case a palimpsest of made-up faces
marking that worn story's falling action. Let's end
this now the air conditioning hums, but I reach up

and pull the sun over my face like a shrine
to the missing, let them prism as if a sequined
prom dress pulled from its hanger and returned
to a dance hall of disco balls and fallen plastic stars.