

CHARD deNIORD

Absence

Absence is a face that hangs
in the air, as if the air
were a screen and your heart
the machine that casts the image.

Absence is the shadow
that has broken free of its forms
and wanders the earth.

Absence is a stone, of course.

Absence is the name
the man of faith repeats
in his sleep, and also *the woman*,
until they too are gone.

Absence is the body the soul creates
from air that masquerades as nothing
throughout the house.