

GRETCHEN STEELE PRATT

Not even rustles from your red dress, rustles

Coming down the stairs before the red. Not reindeer coming
Towards the fence with their antlers sawed off, towards
Small hands shoved through the chain-link fence, small
Fingernails licked by their dry tongues. Not even fingernails
Sinking into grass. Not even winter sunlight sinking
Without finding me asleep on the rug without
Blankets under the potted Norfolk pine. Not river green blanket
Humidity hanging in the trees. Not Mom and Dad, their humidity,
Amber cocktails melting their veins at that hour. Not amber
Bobby pins sunk in brown pomaded hair. Not even bobby pins
Dropping on the red aisle. Not even that dime dropping
Into my flute before I go on stage. Not the night falling into
Clicking dials of an old gas pump or a cream umbrella clicking
Open. Just bats softening out of the chimney into the open
Backyard blue darkness. Not even me in the wet backyard
Taking off my shirt in front of the new roses taking off.

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