

MARGARET ROSS

DISSOLUTION

What things are vapor? Not the air. The
 nightstand and the buckled
 mattress, not the sheet. I take

my time. Brass knob
 my wrist must turn to leave, its tendons
 torqued stems to the long

bouquet unfolding livid colors out there on the other
 side, the future, what you
 could have done, you could have

gone and seen when you have not left, have
 yet to leave. Someone tell me
 why “an unassuming aspect of

173

the gas that afterwards we came to
 realize was.” This
 life, how to put it down

past the sprayed-on yellow
 edge like a lit streak under the door beyond
 which people carry on

dropped voices. Here
 in whose studio. I always wake before. Don't stir. Dim silver
 bough the length of me is kindred to me, sprawled across

cool air outside, my best
 friend. The window's fogged *yes everything does have to be seen*
 through again again again again I run my finger down to

make a clear strip, hypodermic. Some days
plucked from extinction by a sharp detail. A bird
in the hall I didn't try to help, what things are

for. The sheer
green skirt I lost, I left
a mark, faint whiff of sulfur so the aether caught, a man had

half an earlobe gone, his torso broad and blank as a door and ticking
on the other side I held my hand up to the door to test
and the door was hot. I was just going

to say. Quiet. Is it Nobody there? Tell me
how many flights we are
above the world. Can't you

174

force me so then I could be forced
to admit invulnerable live bounds, no threshold to
cross. Not the voice. The floorboards and the ribbon wire. The

sky stale white of a corrective
brace for the street's evacuated
spine, it seems to me I've already gone

a long time. Did I ask to go

*I lay down in an olive grove because
the grass was gold and nobody there and some*

*with a blue rope tied about their girth
width of a girl's thigh for what*

*reason I don't know. My long hair
was a net unraveled*

If the thought evaporates. If the thought
there isn't any room for when a day slides off
and the hissing trees, touch always pulls me

back up to the skin, hand
the fish know, vague through the scrim
of the pond and mindless as they are. Slim light

daggers about. Put your head down. Do you
recognize yourself? I was trying to get to
the other side of love. I had no way to go. I was standing

175

on a platform riddled with black holes, stamped-flat ancient gum
somebody's mouth had worked the pink from. P.A. told
how far things were away. Put my face down, back against slick milky

tiles sealing off the end. I was standing barefoot on dank air between
the railing and a drying sweater. I was standing several inches
higher than myself pitched on blue neon plastic heels. Glass necks

glittered down at me from marble shelves. I was standing
still. I was. Is that what I believe? I was on something I long lay fingering
the tall coarse reedy shore. It felt like candor. His throat clicks. Nobody

move. Firm limit to your will you'll never meet who were
for them such slender interruption of the atmosphere
I watched the sash I wanted to be

held down so there could be no
brute space left to
breathe, why didn't you

look, why didn't you look up and seem
had you no pride
weren't you free?