



PROJECT MUSE®

Turn

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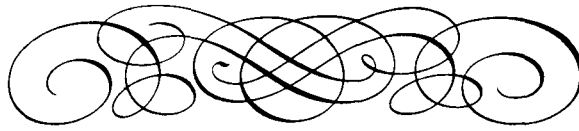
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Turn

by JANE WILSON JOYCE



I wish I grasped the grammar
of our situation, how it is
that failing
to follow sequences
we confuse action and existence
meaning to make
distinctions subtle
as multiples of tulle
obvious
as the block of wood
tucked in the satin shoe

You lie
still somewhere
or are moving somewhere
Your leaving
left me
your dust to eat
I make no sense of
your obituary

its prose smooth
as the itinerary of stone
water travels over
I cannot abide
to take steps
to face what
I cannot see
knowing I must forgive
us both
our journeys

I am afraid
if I speak the ache
of the pinched nerve
splayed redhot on the inner lid
or sing pain's true pitch
and weight, its falling
rhythm will call
the tunes to mind
causing us all
to rise up
to rise up and dance
over the cliff's raw lip
into the clear idiom
of silence

I step in
under the cool roof of stone
where you are
where water murmurs
and the maple paddle
clacks in the churn
before I was born
This is your memory I keep
your memory I must keep
singing