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Three Poems

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Three Poems

SYNAPTIC

A peony unfolds in a green vase.
I sit to ripen: the mind is a fountain
brimming at the hub of emptiness.

Uncoiling a hose to irrigate
a quince tree in the orchard, I sense
water flow before it flows

through my hands. A pilot debriefs:
feeling like an irrational number,
he yearns to sail to Fiji

but knows fleeing is a mirage.
The word *artichoke* must have
accompanied an artichoke on the journey

from Arabic into English—
must have?—in a zoo, a yellow giraffe.
Inhaling, I focus on lifting

vertebrae, one by one, forming
new pathways up the spine. My hands
rub myrrh-scented oil on your skin.

THE INFINITY POOL

Someone snips barbed wire and gathers
yerba mansa in the field; the Great Red Spot

on Jupiter whirls counterclockwise;
sea turtles beach on white sand. In the sky,

a rose hue floats over a blue which limns
a deeper blue at the horizon. Unwrapping

chewing gum, a child asks, “Where is
the end to matter?” Over time, a puffer

fish evolved resistance to tetrodotoxin
and synthesized it. I try on T-shirts

from a shelf, but not, twenty months later,
your father’s pajamas in the drawer.

Now the stiletto palm leaves are delineated,
a yellow-billed cardinal sips at a ledge.

By long count, a day’s a drop in an infinity
pool. The rose tips of clouds whiten;

someone sprinkles crushed mica into clay
and sand before plastering an interior wall.

POINT-BLANK

Through the irregular mesh of a web,
you shove an inverted vase down
but, instead of trapping a black widow,
squash it when the glass strikes
the floor. In Medellín, a man recalls faces
but can’t recall what he wrote or said
last night; fretting at the widening chasm,
he runs from *x* but does not know
if he lunges to his end. Put your fingers
on the mind’s strings: in the silence,
you do not grasp silence—a thoughtless
thought permeates you. Lifting the vase,
you gaze at spider legs on the brick floor,
the bulk of the black widow smeared
inside the glass. *A yesterday like today*,
he wrote, and, in his point-blank gaze,
for a second, you are a spider in a web.