

SIMON PERCHIK

## Three Poems

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You've done it before, the horse  
lowers its head heavier and heavier  
—you know some wagon

is always getting lost, its wheels  
rotted out, wobbling and pull  
the same overloaded sun

—you know how it ends, the horse  
falls on its side, the whip  
criss crosses, not sure

how far before it can recognize  
the road from the living  
from the stomping in the open

desperate for the loose dirt  
that flows back, taken in  
as if an ancient sea

is still struggling in your hand  
though you sift this still damp grass  
for hooves, reminded over and over

by waves, and the evenings  
now on their own without you  
already know what to do.

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As if the sun lets its darkness  
take hold and night after night  
your hand begins that vague ripple

from there to here—your arm becomes  
some ancient wave and you can't stop  
or slow the unraveling

or along each step by step  
the stillness all light attracts  
once it stands at the door

—you have no choice! it's hello  
or be left, breathing in  
just to stretch out and keep moving

—you can't be born  
without these stars in motion  
—you can't die either

though each evening brings you  
another mourner, one alongside the other  
nomads along the road where once

a dark sea covered the sky  
set it adrift, first as a warm breeze  
then the hillsides slowly over your heart.

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Disguised as mountainside  
—all wing though the sky  
can't let go and all evening

updraft—the sun thins out  
becomes red then black  
dead on the ground, choked

as if every climb is made from dirt  
keeps its hold till the air  
takes root and you drift

without moving or water  
—you hound this darkness  
by mining it arm over arm

and around each stone  
your arms held in  
picking up speed—the sun

dangling from your teeth  
and the distance  
that has forgotten how.

