

Finding the Way: Back

(... reading Proust)

1. Fitting a copper piece in my boot  
one hundred years ago when it snows  
my grandmother calls me  
Ellen. Tucking hatpins through black straw  
in the steaming milk my jaw is old  
the shadow of Saltcoats' nets the night  
my grandfather left  
for sea.

In the resthome he slipped me  
a silver half-dollar and  
sugared orange slices. Tobacco fingers  
on the sheet the old scars yellow  
cod scales on his wrists.

2. I put your black hat on.  
"What makes you think we love  
people to please them. We love  
because we cannot  
help it."

You kick my ankles erratic  
in sleep. I bite a river agate  
for the taste of blood. Sucking

until it breaks  
in my mouth.

The Mirror

... for Beatrice Cenci

Cenci fathered you in glass / surfaces  
you always saw his face approaching

so many lovers over the steps  
and into the tunnel water under your bedroom.

The mirror waits in the palazzo, you  
will not let us rest alone in any room / we see you

in all shining objects knife blades the light  
from the campo outside pressing a hand on the glass.

-- Sydney Campbell

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