

*“rapid capitalists  
and systematic women”*  
—Pablo Neruda

Pablo, I am both  
blood smeared on the page  
red then brown.  
My hip moves up, twists  
muscles spasm  
dance without me.  
Ice heat ice heat.

Pablo, I want to live in Italy  
curtains billowing at unscreened windows  
curving stairs narrow roads olive trees grape vines  
trains.

But there is the matter  
of the mortgage the meals  
the shoes and books  
too many keys dangle from my waist.  
Michelangelo knew hunger like a friend.  
All he lived for were the paints,  
the marble.

He would say, “There’s only now,”  
white chips of time powdering his skin.  
But Pablo, I am a systematic woman.  
I grid and column, table and chart.  
My now can’t breathe, all these lines  
stabbed through her.

Pablo, the moon  
barely holds me in her ebb and flow.  
“Feast now, famine later,” she says  
and she should know.  
Her thin smile, her hungry mouthed “O”  
which shall I pray to?  
Pablo, Pablo.

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