

## Spanish Blues

“I want to weep because I feel like it,  
pronouncing my name, Federico Garcia Lorca,  
on the shore of this lake...”  
–“Double Poem of Lake Eden”

Late afternoon in the Hayward marsh  
I had no desire to speak my name  
as I sat in my patched raingear  
reading about the life of Lorca.  
Not to the gravel thrown up on the banks  
or the egret feathers and guano,  
and not to the fox who came out of the reeds,  
red fur streaked with tidewater,  
who glanced at me sideways and then vanished  
in the rough grass of the estuary.

Watching its small tracks fill  
in the failing light  
I could feel my body settle deeper.  
I remembered things I'd stolen,  
money, flowers, the red tool box,  
and never told anyone;  
kindnesses and love betrayed,  
nights of false promise whispered  
into the ears of credulous women,  
their children eyeing the door while I packed.

There was no gypsy music like his  
rising from the hills of my childhood—  
no tree of song branching up from the earth  
with guitars that hovered like birds of prey.  
And I was no solitary horseman

with olives in my saddlebags,  
kicking up dust on the narrow road.

But as I squatted in the salt marsh,  
the lights of a tanker winking on near the bridge,  
I could feel this desire to sing about death  
and to praise the deep pools and shoreline  
of the fallen landscape that held me.  
Three days into my fiftieth year  
the tide lay slack on the Hayward flats,  
its husks of dead starfish trapped in the mud  
and the sky turning dark as the sea.