

Nothing Will Change Except Everything

by Kayla King

Whistle in the dark here, but don't wait
for the echo. Shadows permit our passage.
Because that's what they must do,
now severed from this living. And we don't speak
their names, for fear they will follow us
home

and sing nothing but madrigals about girls with marigolds
woven through their hair, about the threads of fate,
about the stories and the weaving and the slaughter.
Such wretches, they'll mock, as we turn over
and again in bed two nights from
now.

But it's still today.

Exiting these halls feels a bit like letting go
because beyond there are ancient trees, and like us,
they wear the look of youth with splendor, never revealing
the arcane within. Perhaps our bones, too, must be ringed inside
with the years and the lives we've lived
before.

You sneeze three times, and I know you must've done the same
last time. Say it must be afternoon now, arms out, eyes
down toward the cobbled ground to see
where your shadow sits
splayed; a sundial, a
triumph.

And light melts through the leaves
overhead, an illusion of being within
and without, like much of this hallowed place.
We will be sun-scorched by the end,
but we don't know that
yet.

I photograph you solemn, and I'm not sure I'll save it,
preferring the blurred version from an hour before
finding the steps one after the other. You disappeared,
but only for a moment.
And the world was too
quiet.

In the image, you resemble a ghost.
We won't frame it. But here, I tell you
I might because here, I'm obsessed
with the hauntings. We haven't yet turned
twenty-five, but I feel so
old.

I've yet to believe in the idea of being
rooted, only noticing how rare it must be to remain
enamored with one's ankles for so many years. I love mine,
I tell you. Find the rhythm of the admission take
the shape of a poem I'll never
write.

Together we read the medieval names
for the plants. I favor the henbane
for the way it ticks over the tongue in seconds of one
and two. I find the same icterine pattern of petals
on the tapestries when finally we wander back
inside.

And in the next room, a basin, which reminds of the waters
of memory. I wish to keep such a liquid vial for my own after
this day ends. But that's not the way time works,
you explain. It's only a whisper, but still the ramifications
of such sensical truths reverberate through these stone walls to the
past,

to our future. We don't know
it yet, but the echoes
will find us, as
echoes
always
do.