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Author

Shapiro, Johanna

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Morning Song

By Marcia F. Brown

Here, I place
a blue glazed cup
where the wood
is slightly whitened.
Here, I lay down
two bright spoons,
our breakfast saucers, napkins
white and smooth as milk.

I am stirring at the sink,
I am stirring
the amount of dew
you can gather in two hands,
folding it into the fragile
quiet of the house.
Before the eggs,
before the coffee
heaving like a warm cat,
I step out to the feeder—
one foot, then the other,
alive on wet blades.
Air lifts my gown—I might fly—

This thistle seed I pour
is for the tiny birds.
This ritual,
for all things frail
and imperiled.
Wings surround me, frothing
the air. I am struck
by what becomes holy.

A woman
who lost her teenage child
to an illness without mercy,
said that at the end, her daughter
sat up in her hospital bed
and asked:
What should I do?
What should I do?

Into a white enamel bath
I lower four brown eggs.
You fill the door frame,
warm and rumpled, kiss
the crown of my head.
I know how the topmost leaves
of dusty trees
feel at the advent
of the monsoon rains.

I carry the woman with the lost child
in my pocket, where she murmurs
her love song without end:

Just this, each day:
Bear yourself up on small wings
to receive what is given.
Feed one another
with such tenderness,
it could almost be an answer.