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To Be the Daughter of Demeter

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To Be the Daughter of Demeter
Malina Infante

Long are the nights waiting for sleep in the arms
of a man you do not love. Even the rain
beats harsh on the glass of his lone window. Lie
your head on his chest,

you can't admire the low thump of his heart—
you cut your mother off four months ago for
this—but you do feel his ribs stabbing your ear.
You know he's asleep

only when those twitches jolt through his body,
and you remember the girl, still dry, in her
mother's arms during the flood in Kyiv. Scooped up
on her hip, her feet

tucked into the dense dough of mother's stomach,
she wanted down—*no*. She wanted to frolic
the urban tides, so her mother settled, placed
her on a fountain's

wall, just above the water line. In its pool,
yellow window box daffodils stretched in streaked
reflections, gold flecks flickered in the ripples
as the sun pierced cloud

cover. She slipped free of her mother's grasp, ran
the fountain's circle once, twice, before she slid
on wet stone and tumbled into the basin.
She cracked the surface,

sunk down and never heard her mother's cry. Now
you should kick free, swim out of his sheets and run
straight through the night, run home to your mother, where
his touch would never

imprint on your skin again. But with each twitch,
his grip tightens for an instant. The rain drums
even louder—you can't tell his skin apart
from yours anymore.