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Small City Midnight
 Mary Ann Mayer © 2013



Jubilant, it overflows. Music, muse,
 the troubadour's voice, torch
 beneath the treble,
 Again and again, he sings,
*Will you fall apart on me
 While I fall apart on you?*

Chords ascend, descend, build to a gust.
 His gaze, obsidian over the room, light on
 faces, a warmth.
 And how we dance!

Bodies obliging song obliging bodies
 to the tipping point, trim—
 leaning on the song,
 as if it's holding us up...
 loving the song, as if, as if
 it were not destined to leave—

This song you never knew was written for you,
 and suddenly you feel
 there's a way,
 if you want, into everything

Nocturne

It's the way the street corners whisper
 and the tail lights answer
 as the tall girl, the one with the habit, slips
 into the alley
 and doors shut before winter lets the cold in

Tracks

Today from a distance I hear your train.
 Without sound, snow begins to fall.
 Here I am talking to trains again—
 It falls it melts it falls.

Acknowledgements

small city midnight
 inspired by Tennessee William's torch play,
Talk to me like the rain and let me listen

No Glass To Hold These Hours
 inspired by Mark Cutler's torch song, *Fall Apart* —
 and the Providence bar, Nick-a-Nees

Contains lines, slightly adapted,
 from TS Eliot and Michael Hofmann

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No Glass To Hold These Hours

That song,
 it changes people.
 Finds you inside your life
 on your way to doing other things.
 Beautiful, how the air grows around it,
 stretching, expectant, full as can be
 the song quivers the air
 quickens the need
 weaves and attaches
 like arousal rouses by degree.
 There's gladness inside this place.
 The street shakes out its hardness and ease,
 numbered and blessed.
 I like the half-tone light, the settling-in
 sounds. Dominoes, applause, side-talk,
 a certain smolder and hush...
 and the satin-eyed bartender pours.
 There is no glass to hold these hours!