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Something like home

I've often wondered what it took to get here—
not my wintering spot in the prairies, flushed

with fescues, black and brown colors of soil,
tall grasslands, wild rice or ice. Not the pursuit

of the unknown—the unfamiliar ghosts thronging
us in dreams, the same pale daylight thoughts

that, right now, swarm my head, or ahead,
a hundred vehicles jamming the different lanes

you could trace like dotted lines of impatience
to some varied destinations. Do we always get

there? Not the physical ones that put miles
on our cars or pins on our tires. Not the ones

that wring hugs off our chests, or pour ink
on our tongues. I'm talking of a different one—

the intimate star within you that aches to shimmer
one day in an imminent global night.

What would it take to get there? I may never know.
But right here, it's a different ride. My toddler

breathes warmly beside me as if whiffing
out of my belly, and a newborn settles on my arms

like a song. It took countless trips flung across three
continents to find the love that makes such moments.

But somewhere else, there's a moment
without this. What happens when we find ourselves

there—no song or ballad, no bird or babble,
just the last surviving shard of the will buoying

up the head above the brutal ebbs and wilding waves
that refuse to hush. You wouldn't ask the soul

in the water what it took to get here. You hurl a hand,
and unfurl a land for two, and soon the one

breathing beside you may be unknown, unfamiliar,
the lost or broken or found, a stranger

with a different tongue or color, and you could strike
a conversation that fires, and at some ripe

or older age, you could use that same flame,
that same warmth—when the prairie throws

its solitude and snows its building walls, and inside,
when room doors fail to creak or hum,

lights fail to leap or turn, and all you have are memories,
plateful of journeys, the songs of barred owls

breaking through the louvers to recite each line
of every known love story to get

you through the night.