

## 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.