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## Without Praise

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## Theresa: Without Praise

### WITHOUT PRAISE

Centa Theresa

it can seem the sun only partially rises,  
painting the sky with shy light, and it seems  
children too soon forget how to play  
when there's been no praise.

Without praise, couples uncouple,  
trees are leafless in spring, every dream  
goes in search of its dreamer, each breath fears  
for the next. As with no peace

and no dream, without praise, tables stay cluttered  
with yesterday's news, dropped sugar, the single  
crumpled napkin, and the woman never  
finds her keys, the man never dies peacefully.

In a land where newspapers sell for bread  
and hands hang by a thread to the arms  
they belong to, as the instinct for belonging  
has faded from the pages of people's minds,

scarcity reigns. This morning I awoke  
to this dismissal, the lack of wonder  
like beggars at my feet. The featherless birds,  
gaunt cats, and hopelessly newborn appeared,

reminding me they are mine to feed.  
Forsaken infants, all of them—some lack  
strength to get off their backs, while others,  
already walking, speak an unreadable tongue,

leap over the bedposts like acrobats  
vying for my attention, and when I still  
won't heed their call, one will flash

monster eyes and full sets of teeth.

I am waking late in their bed, the sun nearly  
scorching the sky, its constant light  
bleeding along the untended yard.