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Aubade

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Perrine: Aubade

AUBADE

Jennifer Perrine

Dawn came coral as a reef running
 like a rib under the skin of the sky, sliced
 the black open, wicked wound, blood blown
 across the surface of the day. She flirted
through curtains, made her way through our room
 as a calm breeze sweeps cleanly across the town
 just after the tornado's touched down.
We uttered oaths, made lewd gestures—still she beat
her bird body against our windows—
 so we tried disguises: cons with slick come-ons
 swindling one last dollar from the dark,
 devils endeavoring to outscorch the sun,
but our horns were dulled by caresses,
 eroded by the rub of silk. Let's face it,
 we're no tricksters, no bold warriors,
 though we fought, our teeth bared, claws tearing the light.
We're no fools either: if we can't hold
 back morning, we'll lean into it, invent new
 languages where every word means night.