

MOURNING DIARY

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A CENTO PANTOUM USING LINES FROM ROLAND BARTHES' MOURNING DIARY (FSG, NY, 2010)

Mourning—a cruel country where I'm no longer afraid.
The formal beginning of the long bereavement.
This terrifies me.
I know my mourning will be chaotic.

The formal beginning of the long bereavement.
Eighteen months for a mother, a father.
I know my mourning will be chaotic.
We don't forget, but something vacant settles in.

Eighteen months for a mother, a father.
Each of us has his own rhythm of suffering.
We don't forget, but something vacant settles in.
Suffering, like a stone (around my neck, deep inside me).

Each of us has his own rhythm of suffering.
This morning—the offer of lightness.
Suffering, like a stone (around my neck, deep inside me).
I ask for nothing but to live in my suffering.

This morning—the offer of lightness.
For the first time, I decide to wear a colored scarf.
I ask for nothing but to live in my suffering.
I limp along through my mourning.

For the first time, I decide to wear a colored scarf.
First Sunday morning without her.
I limp along through my mourning.
Henceforth and forever I am my own mother.

First Sunday morning without her.
Everyone is extremely nice, yet I feel entirely alone.
Henceforth and forever I am my own mother.
From now on my death would kill no one.

Everyone is extremely nice, yet I feel entirely alone.
This terrifies me.
From now on my death would kill no one.
Mourning: a cruel country where I'm no longer afraid.