

PAN'S DANCE

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New and Selected Poems

REBECCA LAW

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I play Haydn after a dark day
and feel the simple warmth in my hands.

—Tomas Tranströmer

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A Holy Night—By Way of Explanation

The cartoonist thought is easy to be happy
and the patient asked why he was most often sad.

Morning rain saturated the canvas chairs
on the breakfast terrace; and a late sun
shone hard till they dried.

The new house creaked and snapped
with growing pains; and an old oak
groaned as it met once more with wind.

A willy wagtail turned east to west
in an eyeblick; yet the duck was forever
far from the pond.

Stars clustered, soared and arranged the
constellation of the Southern Cross
and our wild thunderstorm brought lightning.

The pillows on the bed were soft
and some hard, whilst day into night

was an upward movement—the ground
more dark than a newly expired match.

An Illustration for Nest Builders

Gabled roofs
so that
the hail breaks
to fall as particles,
flakes, the rain
with less momentum,
branches and smaller branches
with leaves to fall as
laymedowns,
so that
inside the last room
is least often
a kitchen for its roof:
the spine of an open book
the downstairs candle lights
empty pages with a centred
shadowline
so that
the night, for all its stars,
is in windows,
not ominous over our heads.

To a Sparrow

There's a line of thought
starting with a charcoal prayer,

a morning sun abiding,
the short and long of twigs,

my crowea exalata,
a presence of heart;

that shadowlike follows
in small bird feet,

even, dressed in finery,

doggedly pulling at my skirts,

the rubbed tear-ducts, to shade;

where almost stopped
you are listening
to small songs

your whole life,
a line of thought