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CORRESPONDENCES

It is just like you. The first snow
quiets footsteps and muffles
house-noises. Last year
for me there was no winter,
and in the steamy November heat
I waited for news of your cold world.
The palm pressed its striped fingers
over the rising sun, stroked the room.

It was there I lived the life of trees,
my days dictated by sunlight
or the fierce wind of monsoons.
I awoke feeling the scratch of insects and wood.

After three more weeks, when no word came,
I bought a pad and a ballpoint and wrote:
The sky is trembling over the rice paddies.
Where are you?

The women I slept beside on the matted floor
awoke each morning to fix breakfast,
feed the chickens, work the fields.
Some sifted through trash,
sorted plastic, paper, tin,
sent bottles to be broken into pieces.
I sweat beside them in the heat,
but at night I dreamt of snow,
and woke up moaning for the cold.
There was no reply.

Now, in ice-bitten December air
my body holds a feverish memory;
the heavy crush of metal against glass,
the silent blush of orchids opening at dawn.