

MOON  
CROSSING  
BRIDGE

p o e t r y   b y

TESS GALLAGHER

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## CLOSE TO ME NOW

Through low valley mist  
I saw the horses  
barely moving, caressed flank  
and forelock, the dip  
of the back. Human love is a wonder  
if only to say: this body! the mist!

## W A K E

Three nights you lay in our house.  
Three nights in the chill of the body.  
Did I want to prove how surely  
I'd been left behind? In the room's great dark  
I climbed up beside you onto our high bed, bed  
we'd loved in and slept in, married  
and unmarried.

There was a halo of cold around you  
as if the body's messages carry farther  
in death, my own warmth taking on the silver-white  
of a voice sent unbroken across snow just to hear  
itself in its clarity of calling. We were dead  
a little while together then, serene  
and afloat on the strange broad canopy  
of the abandoned world.

## I STOP WRITING THE POEM

to fold the clothes. No matter who lives  
or who dies, I'm still a woman.  
I'll always have plenty to do.  
I bring the arms of his shirt  
together. Nothing can stop  
our tenderness. I'll get back  
to the poem. I'll get back to being  
a woman. But for now  
there's a shirt, a giant shirt  
in my hands, and somewhere a small girl  
standing next to her mother  
watching to see how it's done.

## RED POPPY

That linkage of warnings sent a tremor through June  
as if to prepare October in the hardest apples.

One week in late July we held hands  
through the bars of his hospital bed. Our sleep  
made a canopy over us and it seemed I heard  
its durable roaring in the companion sleep  
of what must have been our Bedouin god, and now  
when the poppy lets go I know it is to lay bare  
his thickly seeded black coach  
at the pinnacle of dying.

My shaggy ponies heard the shallow snapping of silk  
but grazed on down the hillside, their prayer flags  
tearing at the void – what we  
stared into, its cool flux  
of blue and white. How just shaking at flies  
they sprinkled the air with the soft unconscious praise  
of bells braided into their manes. My life

simplified to “for him” and his thinned like an injection  
wearing off so the real gave way to  
the more-than-real, each moment’s carmine  
abundance, furl of reddest petals  
lifted from the stalk and no hint of the black  
hussar’s hat at the center. By then his breathing stopped  
so gradually I had to brush lips to know  
an ending. Tasting then that plush of scarlet  
which is the last of warmth, kissless kiss  
he would have given. Mine to extend a lover’s right past its radius,  
to give and also most needfully, my gallant hussar,  
to bend and take.

## YES

Now we are like that flat cone of sand  
in the garden of the Silver Pavilion in Kyōto  
designed to appear only in moonlight.

Do you want me to mourn?

Do you want me to wear black?

Or like moonlight on whitest sand  
to use your dark, to gleam, to shimmer?

I gleam. I mourn.