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ED FALCO

## Meditation on Loss

One moment of meditation leads to sailing down stairs. First there's the consideration of loss: Though she has metamorphosed into the young woman I love, the child I love is no longer here. Her hand wrapped around my two fingers as we walked along a beach, she turned light into water: *Look! Look! The sun is like a waterfall!* Sunlight spilled to the ocean through a break in thick clouds. Such is the jolt of that memory I have to stop a moment till it weakens, because I miss her and the years are falling away. I'm on a city street. Manhattan. Mid-day. Summer. I'm sitting on a brownstone stoop with my hands over my eyes, and it's in that willed dark that the basement door opens and I start down stairs. Now I'm a child. That's my mother in our Brooklyn home, in the basement where I'm not allowed to go. She's putting a penny in the fuse box. The lights are out. I remember the darkness. I watch her from the top of the stairs as she pushes in the penny where the fuse is supposed to go and then the blue flash, bright solid blue like a lightning strike might look deep underwater, and then for a second her hand is on fire. She flies away from me through the dark, lit up by a flame that envelopes her hand before it's dark again and I'm sailing down the stairs because the memory is partly what happened and partly the dream of it that recurred for many years. My mother's hand is on fire and then it's not and she's holding me in the dark. How strange is this world? My mother's flaming hand, the waterfall of the sun. The way the years flash past, and a moment never ends.