

LEILA CHATTI

# PERSEPHONE

*after Louise Glück*

There was, in you, this coldness.  
It turned me cold. My heart,  
those days,  
like a window left open.

\*

I turned cold. My heart  
pointless as stars  
above a window. You left  
to be good

to me. It was pointless.  
The injury was there.  
What good were you  
to me gone?

Another injury,  
like the first  
that formed me. It's never gone.  
That harm delivered me to you.

\*

First  
you touched me, then  
the earth opened. Like harm  
in the mind, snow

touched everything there  
was to be touched. World  
bright and unspeaking. Like you. I didn't mind.  
That doorway: I climbed in.

\*

The world could not touch me;  
I was in the other world.  
One with no doors, only windows  
to look upon rows of barren trees.

I was in the other world;  
my companions were light and silence  
I couldn't bear. *Look*, said my mind  
as it disappeared.

\*

Only light and silence  
left in the field. Snow  
my body disappeared  
bit by bit.

My back against the snow in the field.  
Stripped to the self.  
Red, bit by cold. And you  
turning, then, cold again. Away.

\*

Suffering stripped me to my self, my true nature  
unearthed. A violent kind  
of knowing. The world turned cold again, away again  
from my mind. There is lucidity

in winter. A necessary violence against the earth.  
Loving you was like that.  
My heart destroyed, my mind.  
To know it could be, and still go on.

\*

Being loved, by you, I  
thought would rescue me.  
To know someone could  
if not myself. This ridiculous

truth. I was not rescued  
from suffering; love was suffering  
I made myself. Ridiculous,  
I abandon the world, return again

to the cleft in the earth. To love, to suffering,  
those private days of winter.  
I would give it back. The world. *Do not abandon me.*  
I speak to the nothing where you are. The scar. In me. This coldness.