

He Won't Give Up, I Won't Give Up

Just now: a woman's hand balances the drunk weight
of my loose elbow like a lost child

in a hurt state. I fight and drown against what
so much of me won't stop wanting. Looking
around a loud dark

room alive with eyes, eyes alive with room for my same kind
of loss, of want. Our loss:
a bucket of hunted fish left out in rain

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accidentally, us, swallowed in sound—
Earth's wet falling

back to Earth again. I spill
as pain spills into life. As change grows

heavier, harder
to hold and more
impatient. I worry

I've already ruined me. If I lie to myself, to whom else
am I lying? Soft with time, I know
more than remember

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the way one old man falls
asleep, drunk at our kitchen table,
his head somehow finds relief

in the same crooked angle
as the parking lot basketball hoop I loved,
that I actually loved, even more after

someone had thrown something too hard
through it—I still see
a chunk of concrete—

its plexiglass had a jagged hole
I shot a ball in silence through

once more
then put it all
down. So late now. Sighing. I'll always hold

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that old man's slumped
head lolling behind my eyes, keep feeling
pitiful for both of us, our silences: my lateness

not in seeing but in telling.
I can't forget how I wanted to love

my fists as a kid, small brown eggs
beginning to tremble in a pot
of shallow water.