

MARIANNE POLOSKEY

TWO POEMS



Hate

I heard you tell
many a night, stay away,
but the door
was pushed open anyway
and the uniform
burst into our room.
I could hear you begging
in a little girl's voice,
but one boot dropped
anyway, then the other.
As, moving over,
you thumped
against the wall,
I felt an ache
in my shoulder.
And when the rhythm
of the assault
wired my feet
to your headboard,
I wanted to leap
from my bed
and grab the gun
he always leaned against
the door.
I wanted to shoot him
with his own hate.
I imagined
yanking you up by an arm

like a doll,
pictured us slipping out
of our bodies
as if they were clothes.
No longer targets,
we would float
through the window
into the wide-open
summer night—
bruised clouds,
you and I,
rising purple in the sky.
But I wasn't as brave as you.
I didn't even sob.
All I could do was
crawl deeper.

Buildings

Don't ever tell them
that your father listens
to the news in French or English

and don't repeat
what your parents talk about
behind closed doors.

Don't let on that you're scared
of your own shadow
blotting out more and more light

or of the sirens
that interrupt your play
a little earlier each afternoon.

Don't, as the bombs rain down,
tell the shelter any secrets
just to hear your own voice.

But if the building falls
and you survive,
shout loudly through the stones
that you're alive.