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## Lean Times

Endurance, motion elevates this evening, times  
the sealing of the last impressive book. Bad times

find their way into our matted directives, syntax  
of sandstorms wrestling sandstorms: sure, times

have changed—once drag-racing, we outpaced  
each other, wing on wing. Suffered, nine times out

of ten bracing wind-hardened backs. Now, glass  
beak opens, whistle spits, no more. Lean times

take slivers from candelabra, turn a city's elegance  
to brown. Listless, ocean-bound, I've spent days

in times of drowning—I've listened to the echoes  
catch on bone, tendons undermined. Bad times

make even sane girls glimmer, make whooshing  
noises: who reckons her body's best? Three times

moving's as bad as a fire, said the woman: I've said  
enough, assessed enough complaints. Those times

that words fled my tongue, brittle nights shattered:  
the only rhyme that picked me up was glass. Times

for weeping coincide with danger: gardens, tears  
hide the beat arrival of flames. I've wiped the times

tables from my mind, fairy tales from my repertoire—  
who loves the toe's blood, lace-chapped, the times

scissors sprang up from the prince's hands? Forget  
the hundred miles, the hours' travel: unleash times

of grief from the locked-up wood. Forget the meals  
left uncooked, drifted morning. Multiply lunchtimes

by twenty, breakfasts by ten. No one will ask again  
what happens during: I call it a sign of the times.

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## Octagon

If, in the grieving  
          patch, widow-  
spider-flecked  
                  filaments attempt  
to have us notice  
not at all—if in the domino  
                  of sound-  
clanging sound, spine  
flexes,          wind hits  
back end  
          of womb—if  
the doorway's  
salient arches  
          sally open,  
bones plucked  
          from us,  
          cherry-  
widened wings,  
                  light  
chapping brink of bricked

