

ALEX TRETBAR

Pantoum after Five Years in Prison

In the hotel room near Airport Way
Green flowers in the bedspread
Whisper to me about loss
And the souls who have slept here.

Green flowers in the bedspread,
I am suddenly one with you
And the souls who have slept here
Waiting for breakfast.

I am suddenly one with you:
I know how it is in hell forever
Waiting for breakfast
Under the blasted tree.

I know how it is in hell forever,
The fireweed ripening
Under the blasted tree,
The dead moon dropping . . .

The fireweed ripening
What came before,
The dead moon dropping
Arrows of old sunlight.

“What came before?”
(I ask this of the walls.)
“Arrows of old sunlight
And the green flowers blooming.”

I ask this of the walls:
Whisper to me about loss
And the green flowers blooming
In the hotel room near Airport Way.