

THE LOSS OF LETTERS

The world never tires
of stories about men traveling
as a test of their manness, oh
the women they encounter
on the way.

A flub, something—a sound
that does not exist for your tongue or ear,
can change the course of a history.
Who knows what Calypso and Circe's real
names were, or if what Odysseus perceived
as jealousy was a medicine of some sort.

To create a ghost, you must break a word,
Or loose the root of it, but what of shape,
what of mimicry as aspiring to what another has,
who doesn't want to think of a woman's belly
as their sky.

Test the strength of your common tongue.
Places, and people disappear with mispronunciation :
exotify : toxify : darken : spread it over : scatter : star.
A shroud—some things have existed so long
they resist your acknowledgement or a name.

Hold the letter on the tickle in your throat,
and carry it across the world like the tired,
intentionally forlorn men did, drop a "t"
for an "x," do your translation for a blackness
that is so spread about it becomes
blue and threadbare with light.