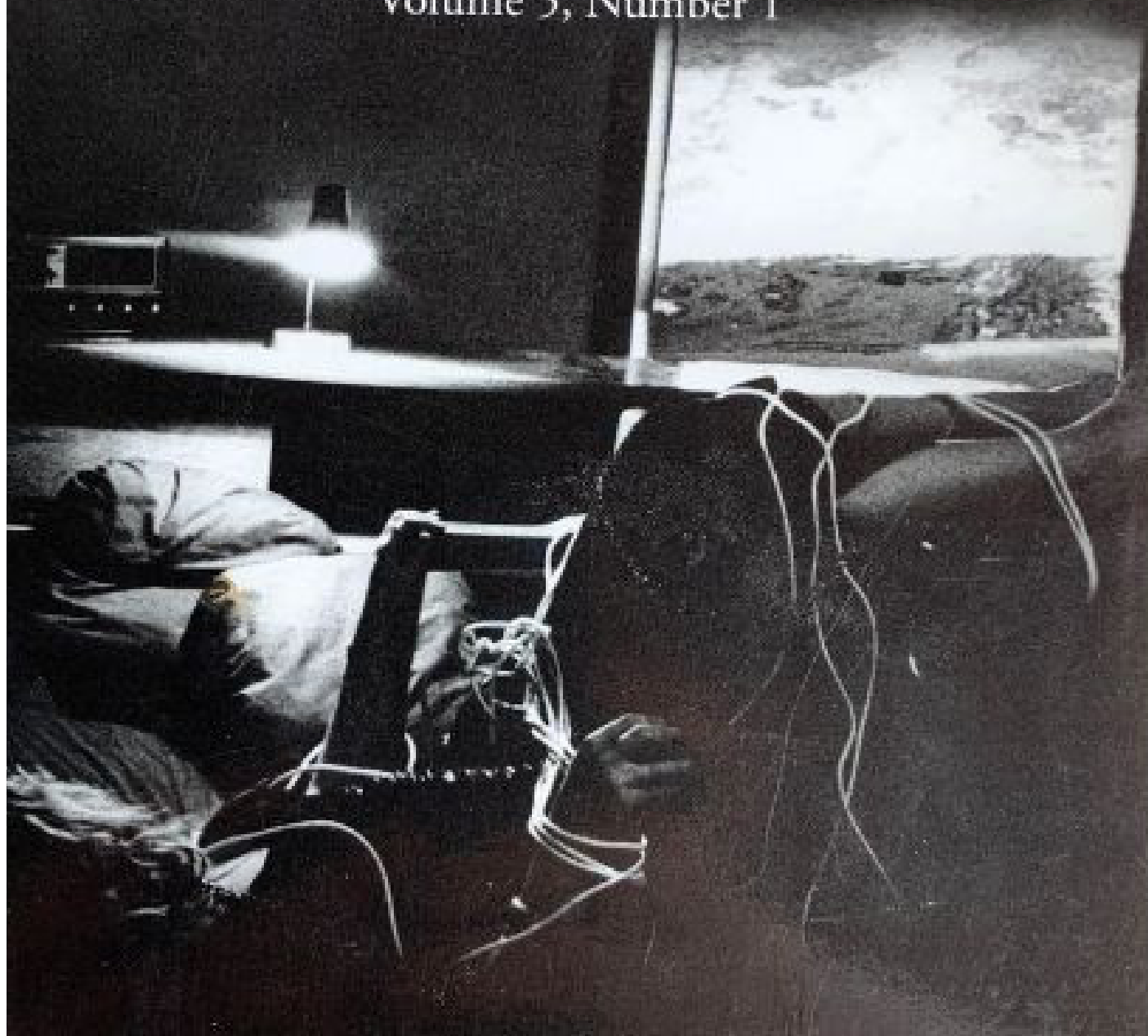


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Deborah Owen Moore

Winter Quintet

I.

Flung winds hum to the riddling rain. Pine-needle vibrato and nothing sings silent but you, whose voices can't gurgle through. You are throwing your heads back onto gray sky in order to laugh in all hilarity, as you must. No one will notice if you're laughing this way all day long.

II.

I am standing at the edge of the winter river, whose flavor I know so well. I can still smell the river on my skin on occasion, though it flowed in me so long ago. Then, I ate nothing but it and so tasted nothing at all.

III.

Your body is still with water you can't touch. I am singing and banging and trying to call you back to me. The winter river fills you, mute and swollen, limbs taut with it.

IV.

Close to quiet, closed afternoon drizzles in through the windows. They are making words out of the letters in the newspaper, snipping and pasting, waiting for small talk, for something to be said.

V.

The sun distant, we cede to the wet. To immerse ourselves in it seems warmer than how these cold months' wind leaves us. Soon we need nothing, collapsing into ourselves—carbon, oxygen—everything water can dissolve and redistribute.

Straining for Bliss

If my body were
as full of air
(these pigeons
beating through
cellophane, terrible sky
angelfood bones)

this is when I see you best
ingesting all the room's air
in one breath, my lungs

to burst from holding
you in my sight, exhale
and I might erase

this moment, your body
against the sky, me
of handblown glass.

Barely sense beginning again—
Radiance. Blueshine. Piano everywhere.