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AMANDA EASON

After the Argument

One wants to hold the other at
the precise moment the other leans away.
I exaggerate. I mean this table
is long and I sit frail
and empty at the end.
The silent movie left me tight-mouthed.

See, I can be silent too.
A fountain is a river
pumped backward against itself.
So it is with voice.
The actress would not speak, I have
exempted myself from the stage.

Speak, and wrap the night
around your partner who will not give in.
He, on this small point remaining firm,
refusing. And (perhaps mistakenly) I
took this for a sign. Quietly
slipping away eel-like into the silk

of the night. Every noise is him
coming to check: Let me crease the stones
from your shoulders, smooth them to silk.
Instead: The crocuses in the windowbox
have died, he said. And she noticed
he was right, their petal-tips had rotted.

How long can I bear the cold,
toes turned onto their knuckles
and the deaf actress singing in my head.

Amy Eason is a New Zealand poet living in London, England. She has published two collections of poetry and a third is forthcoming.