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The Quiet Ones

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The Quiet Ones

Guard the quiet ones—
 the son whose pencil
 touches the lines of his letters
 ever so lightly,
 the daughter whose doleful songs
 weave within the ordinary
 language of her speech.

Their hearts do not burn before us,
 nor shine,
 hard and definite
 like children's pointed stars,
 but blur within a smokey broth of sky.

Frugal, quick, their needs
 are hints, whispers
 at the corner of an eye.

They speak without punctuation,
 what they say drops away
 like an interrupted symphony.

Theirs is the faith of seeds,
 seeds that sprout in the night
 bothering our sleep:
What was it she wanted to say?
What did he mean?
What must I remember?

—Marilyn Bushman-Carlton