

A Misfortune

There are a great many opinions in the world, and a good half of them are held by people who have never been in trouble!

Chekhov, *A Misfortune*

We were at war but all I remember are his mushroom lips my back pressed against the brick wall. It was cold, freezing cold he thought my sheep skin coat pretty, rubbed it with the back of his hand the rims of our hats kissed and young girls walked by – *I'll show them how's it's done* I thought, his tongue pressed into me. Later, he sent me the Chekhov story *A Misfortune* and asked me what I thought it was all about – *mechanically, breathless, driven, master, force*, each word placed just so on the mantle, beside the antique clock and the leather bound Bible.

When you begin to swear things off they come in droves to your door too late to hold one hand up in protest, as the other beckons to come forth, too late for the yes and no charade. To learn what you can live without to master this, drive it into you, swallow it, let it sink ocean deep, then fearless go, breathless go, improper go, devoted go, mad go, witch go, alone go, reckless go, mournful go – did I say we were at war, a whole world crumbling and I felt nothing but this pull as if necessity itself had come to my door and with a naïve swoon I surrendered to one thing when all along it was another and another and another, one more one more, one more, deeper go, devoted go unmoored go, the motion itself the thing unseen.