

in my head this afternoon it rained

there was a time in my life before you
I couldn't have dreamt you up

on a set from Karachi my father taught me chess
mottled black and white marble in a green velvet case

I always loved the knight—since the sixth century
rules for movement unchanged

its landings on the board around it
the star-points of four-leaf clover
and to move it

the gaze sliding over over, just lifting, head, throat,
hair of the second before we recognize rearing—
in another country, my mother
once thrown off a horse just got back on

there are rules for love
I touched every piece with both hands
applied the same pressures remade my mistakes

I walked through the world at the mercy of so much
I couldn't have dreamt you up

in my head this afternoon, it rained
at the base of my skull, I put out bowls I can't let anything go
my mother mountainside mud and snow—
she got back on, she said, so I wouldn't be scared

but I haven't ridden since how much is just coincidence there are rules for love
there are things you don't know my father says superstition is foolish
my father who never played white everything is a lesson in sacrifice

well I want to be indispensable
I hate to feel unprotected
I thought I loved horses
and then I got close—

between any two bodies co-creation of threat— *trampling*—
that's love— if you touch a piece you play it—

only choose what you'll forgive—
in truth nothing could be different beauty
terror an April birth— this is the story you get there was a time
before I touched you being human some other our last