

TWO POEMS BY SIMON PERCHIK

3

My cane peeled clear
the way a morning sky
would bear more weight :this bird

weighed too much, feathers
like firewood, the road on fire
as if I were planting trees
that grow into crosses and the dirt
still blowing slowly across the wings
that stir, that crack —my cane

leaf over leaf each bird
holds on —a dry, bent branch
till something like a hand
guides step by step a place
the dirt will stop moving —the dead

everywhere listening for horns
for winds to curve their shadow
as the Earth each night this road
careens into morning —the dead

hear nothing, they hear my back
that struggles like the sun
—they hear between my shoulder blades
something tries to lift this bird, they hear

another chance. It would be enough!
And my cane that sniffs the ground like a god
could here, here, here, call up a morning
no one, not even the sun, ever hears.

These iron faucets, one
for water from the South, its twin
icy streams and every morning
I turn two valves
the way each child is born
from riverbeds and the sink

filling with skies, with open seas
where the sun looks at its reflection
—the light half wind
half bathing the Earth

—every morning a few drops
on my forehead, just enough sunlight
to remind us all how death
when this bowl drains
as if a great wave, beginning at sunrise
continent over continent —you see it

in stands when the crowds
wait for the crest to be carried
together, washing the water
with water not yet whirlpools and absences

—I hold these two tools
not sure what it is I'm making
or loosening or stone
from stones that weep
even in wells, were brought to this basin
and like a sudden flower
points where the sun and my hand too
wants to go home.