

What We Have Known

Joanna Newsom

The tadpole buoyant as basalt
The seahorse horsing in assault
The owlet in his greenery
The narwhal in his cup of sea
They all believe
They all believe

But collusion bleeds through back alleys
From parapets that end on feet
When one is weak they discretely meet
They throw the bones into the street
And they progress
And we retreat

And all the books our fathers wrote
Are in the middle of the road
Little by little, we implode
History brittle, brown and broke
We can't remember what was spoke
So we stare in wonder at the smoke
What it begets is born alone
We know not now what we have known

Ladies, breathe deep against your whalebones
For your children come home made of stone

The terror seething sees a way
Or like the wheezing of the bay
In miniature agonies
They travel westward on the breeze
Bring us all to our knees

The dappled horse, the sorrel mare
With eyes that do not see but stare
Beneath boots as black as malachite
He drives the nag into the night
Into the night

And all the baby boys we've born
With eyes averted from the storm
Sent off to die in perfect form
We know now what we have known

Satellite photos rhetoric
See how the euphemisms stick
And when they come back broke and burned
Those who return have no return