

Hunger

by Sian Barbara Allen

for E.

Famished I met you
and even hungrier after
rising and rising the
chart of a serious fever.
I wrote you a letter each day of the summer
but I only mailed one because you
can't talk about hunger.

I came back and saw you
and I doubled over with longing
I kissed you and kissed you
and thought I'd go crazy, this hunger
was making me cry in all of my classes
so I went up to Berkeley to learn to better my Gaelic.

On the corner of Telegraph and Bancroft
waiting for taxis
I saw you get out of a car.
I ran after you joyous
only to wake up in the Zoological Building
so I thought I would go to a priest
and ask about hunger.

I went to a mass at Saint Mary Margaret's
in Oakland
and found myself in the confessional
Father, Sir, I said
I have a terrible hunger

"Are you calling me Sir?" he asked
"You know Father's just fine."
Sir Father I said *I'm fainting I'm just really starving*
"A physical hunger?" he asked and then I
was silent
"A spiritual hunger?"
I realized that I shouldn't be there.
I've got to go write a letter thank you I said as I left him
"Do you live in the parish?"
No, I'm renting Naomi's apartment.

Naomi's dissertation was called
"The Settlement of Paraguayan Jews in the South Bay".
She had bones that I had to dust
on all of her tables.
And I wrote you two letters each day of the summer
but I only mailed one because you
can't talk about hunger.

