

Emily's Letter to her Husband's Lover

by Beate Sigriddaughter

*Sometimes I suffer still
from envy of things I don't want.
It feels like defeat. Truth, like a glacial mirror,
shimmers with reality. Are you, perhaps,
the lucky one whose portion of desire
will not dim with use.*

*You know things. You gave him a pool cue
as a gift where I'm not even sure how to spell it.*

*There was a time I dreamed of making love
each day. Soon scent and music were left out.
Desire wilted on the windowsill
while he still tried to soothe me
with his ice-cold hands of generous indifference.
Today—this feels like progress—I don't envy
you this roller coaster ride, this steep ascent
of open-mouthed anticipation, then
the gentling to a shaky stop.*

*I slip the curtain from each morning, step
into the sunlight of regret. I almost kept him
on the shelf with all the trophies. He doesn't belong
there, though my ego keens
about the empty space.*

*I am grateful I had fire once, a wedding
night, a single sequin on a velvet gown.
I do not want to have my edges dulled*

*or his. I imagine you together,
he freshly showered, his eyes drip warmth.
Perhaps you can keep desire alive.
I yearn for my own season of hunger.*

