A Poem of Wanting (with Lauren Bacall)

for S. S.

My body against a wall (Bacall in a still: nerves

prompting the low chin, the *look*) this awareness of verticals he asked three adjectives—explain

(Lauren capturing her millionaire on screen an accident satisfying avarice)

the colour red, explain this smooth kiss, this wine glass, explain the breath of history

in traces of frescoes at Pompeii, the rasping throat of desire.

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Last night I dreamed of want, dreamed *lack* and Bacall's voice, her posture leaning against the piano, almost singing. Dreamed waste and the phases of the moon.

(Dreamed Bogey beside her, scratching

at his chest to let the devil out at the end.)

Dreamed International Klein Blue, the body a brush, brushing you: the canvas, your torso a monotype a painterly bruise.

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Let me address you directly, reader. This movement beneath this shirt, dislodging this garment, is becoming a shoulder,

this dance between us becoming the parallel drop of chords Debussy's harmonies sinking together and pressing into this mattress

(I always

wore pyjamas, she wrote: her own aside)

a debt to the—o—sudden lack of the language of alphabets. The indentation of this moment

ripples across the surface of the world, *lento*—o—*lentissimo*.