

Those Who Stay

I tried making a deal
with my subconscious
yesterday:
three hours of uninterrupted study
 in exchange for a dreamless night;
the will to put down the bottle
 in exchange for a sense of stillness—
the moon and the stars—
so long as the distant constellations
wouldn't form the letters of your name.
Yet my skin still burns
in all the places where you
 so delicately
 traced your fingers;
my lips still tremble every time you pass by,
 carelessly reminding me of the void.

I suppose my subconscious ignored me
once again
because—
oh—
there you are.

I still find pieces of you in every blank canvas
and every stained paintbrush
that taunts my inconsistent creativity.
And now I can't tell if the piercing sound
that resonates in my tired ears
is the sigh of my bones crumbling
under the weight of my own obsessiveness
or the screaming of my fickle heart
demanding I run after you.

by H.L.