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Meeting on 42nd Street

electric haze from streetlights flickering and flickering,
delicate

sprinkles falling through diagonally the sharp Manhattan air
the mailbox eroding slowly like a statuary in the wind
you are there next to it, yes, obscure, floating – to me in time but not space

like a metropolitan archangel crowning the clock of Grand Central
the way you look makes me think of a photograph

by Louis Faurer or Robert Frank
the kind in which a woman is looking at a man
who is looking back at her
or perhaps the man behind her
as if the smoke in the air doesn't affect their lungs
as much as the tires' screech doesn't affect the pavement
as much as the stars behind the clouds
doesn't affect the faith of an onlooker seeking salvation
or a heavenly body

or a painting by Hammershoi in which
you are alone and trapped inside the domesticity
not of an interior but of the night's young howl,
headlights reach into your pores

I look into your eyes, wrinkled in folds with the curve of your mouth
and see early morning flowers, lilies drunk in a quiet splendor
its bodies of vermouth mingling across the arbitrary line of separation between us

we move together as two scraps of metal in a large and mysterious body of water

then when our exchange of gazes becomes tepid of
the crossing black coats funny-faced men and women wear,
our footsteps open themselves up toward Bleecker
where we will watch a film about love
and whoever disregarded love when its face is Ingrid Bergman
is no good for me which is why my palm is wet in yours

not because there is no umbrella over us for me to swoon you

or the violent proximity in the way we walk
for there is no more channel of bodies between us
which I would never wade unless it is to see you