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**Creative Work**

**Emma\***

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If there are words enough for Emma, I do not know them  
There are not words enough to speak her name  
She is there in my memory, blue-black in the morning stall  
Turning her face in shame, in pride

She is there in the soft cedar  
Wide arcs from struggling hooves across the gentle floor  
Where she tried to stand but could not balance on only three legs  
Three legs to count three virtues: forgiveness, grit, and bitterness

And the phantom fourth, a starless bar of wrath  
A brutal ghost whose absence gnawed at her where she lay  
A dark eye brimming with hate  
Watching from the dusky corners of the stable

She lives alone; she is a single incandescent entity  
Shifting in the gloom and dirty straw  
She shares the barn with the main herd of cows  
But if she cannot stand, she cannot join

I see her there, alone in her stall  
Hearing them speak to one another  
Hearing their flesh brush together  
Envyng the touch of a like creature

I brought her grass in the afternoons  
I thought to brighten her eyes  
She was sick and couldn't stay  
If there are words enough, I do not know them

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\* This piece is in honor of Emma, a three-legged cow rescued from the meat industry.