If I Could Have Your Attention

Jonathan Louis Duckworth

-To S. S.

and if I could make of my hands a hammock
for the sinuous long-S slope of your spine
  if I could flocculate moonlight into a salve
to rub away our fears as fingers smooth a bedsheet’s creases
  if I could scan the abjad calligraphy of your curls
and wake with long strands coiled lamia-like under my tongue
  if we could lie enmeshed under night’s aspect
our spooned bodies a crescent luna under the folds
  if I could rise first to cook you breakfast
and convince you basil pesto is morning fare
  if I could recite to you all sixty-three octaves
of Keats’s Isabella with pungent pesto breath
  if we could exhume for each other our buried poems
to pry vital marrow from those discarded bones
  and if we could distill the essential incanti
like sweet incense extracted from fetid agarwood
  if I could breathe my favorite words to you:
“gloaming,” “Ewigkeit,” “azimuth,” “garrigues,” “laverock”
  if I could settle into entire stillness
while you whisper your own treasured motes into my ear
  and if I could only compose the words
that could incite in you half what yours have in me
  I could be with you, or else write no more