Karl Plank

THE SOUND OF ONE POEM TAPPING

God crosses through the thickness of the world to come to us.

Two prisoners whose cells adjoin communicate with each other by knocking on the wall . . . every separation is a link.

Simone Weil

des these poems are not for you not for me

but for one left behind or lost

as when a pilgrim enters a thicket without end
to cross the world

there are no gates nor paths of egress for

this one whose breath I hear ear cupped to the wall

who scratches graffiti on the other side

with pencil stub and shards of glass

this one who when night falls hammers a signal code

rock in hand that chips away at blocks of stone
to this one I tap out words in reply

poems prayers

(First published in Spiritus, Fall 2015)
do your best to come to me before winter

it cannot wait
(by which i mean you cannot wait
or perhaps i cannot wait)

in December waves will surge
from beneath the sea
and ships be lost in cold waters

hard ground will offer no forage
and animals patrol the forest
in packs

trains will not be available

so come to me before the snowfall
(by which i mean i will need you then)
when all turns to ice

already i see them frozen in place
glazed sculptures who have mouths
but cannot speak

no blood runs through them

you will need to share the trials
of the people (if you want to put it that way
i understand)

but I will need you to keep me warm
to bring forth sounds from my throat
that cry words made flesh

so please
come to me before winter
(by which i mean come now)

(First published in The Cresset, Easter 2015)
Karl Plank

GRAVITY

When night calls for sounds
to cease, the barred owl
yet cries “Who cooks for you?”
and somewhere a woman
slippers through the dark
to a kitchen where water drips
a slow beat on the worn basin.
She nooses the tap with string,
a strand that drops to the drain,
and waits for each bead
to catch the thread and
descend into a well of silence
not even night can bring.

(First published in Beloit Poetry Journal, Summer 2014)