

Baby Birch

Joanna Newsom

This is the song for Baby Birch.
I will never know you.
And at the back of what we've done,
there is that knowledge of you. I wish we could take every path.
I could spend a hundred years
adoring you.
Yes, I wish we could take every path,
because I hated to close
the door on you. Do you remember staring,
up at the stars,
so far away in their bulletproof cars?
We heard the rushing, slow intake
of the dark, dark water,
and the engine breaks,
and I said, How about them engine breaks?
And, if I should die before I wake,
will you keep an eye on Baby Birch?
Because I'd hate to see her
make the same mistakes. When it was dark,
I called and you came.
When it was dark, I saw shapes.
When I see stars, I feel, in your hand,
and I see stars,
and I reel, again. Well mercy me. I'll be goddamned.
It's been a long, long time
since I last saw you.
And I have never known the plan.
It's been a long, long time.
How are you?
Your eyes are green. Your hair is gold.
Your hair is black. Your eyes are blue.
I closed the ranks, and I doubled back--
but, you know, I hated to close
the door on you. We take a walk along the dirty lake.
Hear the goose,
cussing at me over her eggs.
You poor little cousin.
I don't want your dregs
(A little baby fussing all over my legs). There is a blacksmith,

and there is a shepherd,
and there is a butcher-boy,
and there is a barber, who's cutting
and cutting away at my only joy.
I saw a rabbit,
as slick as a knife,
and as pale as a candlestick,
and I had thought it'd be harder to do,
but I caught her, and skinned her quick:
held her there,
kicking and mewling,
upended, unspooling, unsung and blue;
told her "wherever you go,
little runaway bunny,
I will find you."
And then she ran,
as they're liable to do. Be at peace, baby, and begone.

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