

ALEXIS ALMEIDA

POEM FOR LINES

It had been three days / of living / in this new apartment / in this new city / where I
could barely speak the language / and I had put my things / in piles / on chairs / and
tables / in temporary / arrangements / in a room / that had been made / to feel “home-
like” / or to give me / and many before me / the impression / we could live here / for
a time / to write. / It seemed suddenly strange / to have to leave one place / to write in
another / but I also knew / I had arranged / my life / into a series of passages / between
variations of jobs / and homes / and people I love / to varying degrees / or had to be
around by necessity / so that each withdrawal / often meant a return / or a prolonged
return / and sometimes / a pivot / or a letting-go / so as I passed through each movement
/ I wasn’t in / or outside / I could still feel its continuous / shape / so when I returned to
a point / I returned to often / an absence was also / returning with me. / The kettle was
making a sound that was deep / and structureless / and saying “here,” / but I was already
thinking “there,” / as I plugged the name of the gallery / into my phone / in Italian /
already imagining the heat / and the street names written into walls / and my GPS was
speaking / also / and I was trying to silence it / as I walked out / into the sun. / The
path drawn / in blue dots / on the screen / kept shifting / it seemed it could be / divided
infinitely / like the sentences / I had been writing / indecisively / for months / there
were choices / I was floating up / in them / I turned / I heard a word / fall off the page /
someone accidentally / took my picture / a memory / was engraved / on my back. / Dizzy
from the speed / of my walking / I was thinking / in a language / of starts / the way
something could begin in one body / and continue in another / dried fruit / for David
Wojnarowicz / colored thread / in skin / a word / I could feel / without a clear memory /
of “before” / I would have to picture it / I was walking / I was saying this / I was almost
done

after Renee Gladman