

Not a Happy Birthday

(For Trudie, in love and pain)

By Jorge Salavert

He will never again bring himself
to wish his wife
a happy birthday.
For how many more years
will they have to endure this pain?
For how many more years
will their wound bleed?

Let me tell those who skirt their words for want of courage
or those who have trodden a path of silence:
Never is a fucking too long time.
Never is a long crooked knife
stabbing their most intimate hopes,
a thorn stuck inside them forever
scoring and gnawing at their hearts,
cutting down, as if it were a flower, their possible life.
Never is the unyielding rock
that smashed their dreams
wrestling all glimpses of joy
away from them.
Never is the timeless time they will remain here,
waiting until it is their time to die,
expecting a return to a time
and place before the never began,
waiting to reunite themselves
with the daughter they lost.

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