

# Jean has claimed

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Like a cigarette  
in a hand  
she has left a trail of gesture behind.  
She has claimed  
that I love  
only in the past tense,  
that only too late do I hear her voice  
in objects left behind.

The stuff of connection  
is matter too. Despite the hopes  
our dazzled eyes arouse,  
it is not light.

And only light does not age,  
only light does not die.  
Because (this is science—  
not Buddhism:) only light  
runs at lightspeed.

I reach for analogies:  
The late Roman empire  
each evening marked with sunblood  
(saints dotting the landscape,  
pinned like butterflies;  
halos, here and there).

They too were like me  
(*are* like me: tense is treacherous now),  
hopeful as seed. Light is  
the only water left to us.