

Sundowning

“Sundowning,
the doctor calls it, the way
he loses words when the light fades.”

— *Maxine Kumin*

He might say to her he's lost
voice, but it wouldn't then be true
if he did. But if he did, he'd add vision,
too: that he's lost all periphery of sight,
his faith for placing in context
that which he sees right

in front of him. He fears
he'll blurt out the lost words
lovers with histories keep covered
beneath the frayed patchwork
of night's quilt. “As they should,”
he mumbles to her senselessly.

Or

what if he details the dream
of his passing, his literary dying, his release
from having to rename, in daylight,
every small thing from which his nights
drain all recognition, including —

including himself. But with the light now
all but succumbed, and the timbre
of her question long since absorbed
by the blackening trees, he shifts
to give her an answer: “It's nothing ...

Nothing is wrong.” —

And

like diamonds these words
hang from the strand of her interest,
split the last of this light,
circle her sculpted, dark neck.

Paul T Hogan
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