

Lightness

The instructor points out the weight-bearing joints of my body
on the map of his body: hips, knees, ankles and I am thinking of how we sail
our dead on shoulders. Through the penultimate lap—
And how lugging a thing on shoulders gives weight
a whole different aspect. Think of Atlas
for eternity shouldering a big ball of heaven
as punishment—must forewarn us a little of
heaven's heaviness.

The instructor now shows how to do hamstring curls
which will do my one bad knee good—I am gasping
for a stronger spine to spread even
the weight of my living. I need to turn my rigid arms
out—
think olive branch, paper crane, the pit of my stomach
to freshwater lagoon. I need to melt the iron of my veins—
forge bridges, steamships as I wait
for this body to buckle to perfection
I need to be light as plum petals, light as moonbeam
on the valley of your shoulders.

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