

MARIANNE BORUCH

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*Like Unto Like*

Someone told me no big deal.  
 Go ahead, translate *Tod*  
 into *toad*. Death in German—  
 why not such a creature “at my shoulder.”  
 So that’s the way: you shrug,  
 you give it a shot. Out of ceaseless mucky  
 muck and weeds, death at collar,  
 at ear, shrunk  
 spring-locked to the page.

*Like unto like.* Thus any medieval herbal,  
 book of remedy and remedy.  
 Or later *The Signature of All Things*, 1622,  
 where a leaf still turns up  
 healing, the heart-shaped digitalis to  
 unstrange a rhythm raving,  
 sweet blood and slow blood through  
 the muscled dark.

I’m a sucker for charms. All at once she  
 slipped or she flowered or she  
 deepened or she darkened. Evening,  
 the saint’s heart, 1308,  
 nuns find a tiny crucifix, their knife after vespers  
 to stare her open. Prayer  
 a sting, a stutter  
 until years, the whole business stained

minor key. Think what that  
sounds like in the middle of the plague.

It's not exactly. We never  
want the same.  
Now and then I wake at night.  
Only shadow equals  
empty enough, equals sideways when  
an arm, a leg. . . .

The moon, how it  
cannot know. Except I saw it fall—  
room and window and across the bed  
brief, as in  
to earth there.