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NAN BRYNE

ALPHONSINE

You were a slim question mark
 in the family album
 Sugary hair dusting
 a red cotton handkerchief
 In your hand a cigarette
 buried beneath bone
 Rimless eyes that accepted no truth
 larger than your own
 Make something up they said
 I am too much for you to fathom
 Spring water racing down a winter hill
 Foolish sixteen I broke
 the unspoken rule
 Whispered your name, *Alphonsine*.
 Grand mere Jeanne,
 Queen mother of cautious sensibilities
 Tempted to despair that I might never
 Imagine something more for myself
 than a squat house
 with a sleek black dog
 Unfurled the flag of fat French lip
Crasse purre. No good whore
 I took the sound in my mouth
 Imagined worlds and places
 as far away as these words

Nan Bryne's poetry appears earlier in this volume.

MARLENE KADAR

Barbaric poem

*To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric*¹

The only way we can know
 barbed wire
 is when we see it flash in the sunlight in idyllic
 meadows.

The only way we can know
 the ardor of the lost child's fever
 is when we can wipe the wet forehead.

The only way we can address a stolen
 daughter's family²
 is by reading about the story you made up
 about her based on facts based on memories
 now found.

To write poetry after Auschwitz is all we can
 know.

¹ *Theodore Adorno, 1949*

² *The stolen daughter is Sidonia Adlersburg, a Roma child who, in 1939, was removed from her family to Auschwitz by the authorities in her home town of Steyr in Austria.*

Marlene Kadar's poetry appears earlier in this volume.