Margaret Atwood, *Eurydice* (1976)

He is here, come down to look for you. It is the song that calls you back, a song of joy and suffering equally: a promise: that things will be different up there than they were last time.

You would rather have gone on feeling nothing, emptiness and silence; the stagnant peace of the deepest sea, which is easier than the noise and flesh of the surface.

You are used to these blanched dim corridors, you are used to the king who passes you without speaking.

The other one is different and you almost remember him. He says he is singing to you because he loves you,

not as you are now, so chilled and minimal: moving and still both, like a white curtain blowing in the draft from a half-opened window beside a chair on which nobody sits.

He wants you to be what he calls real. He wants you to stop light.

He wants to feel himself thickening like a teetrunk or a haunch and see blood on his eyelids when he closes them, and the sun beating.

This love of his is not something he can do if you aren’t there, but what you knew suddenly as you left your body cooling and whitening on the lawn

was that you love him anywhere, even in this land of no memory, even in this domain of hunger. You hold love in your hand, a red seed you had forgotten you were holding.

He has come almost too far. He cannot believe without seeing, and it’s dark here. Go back, you whisper,

but he wants to be fed again by you. O handful of gauze, little bandage, handful of cold air, it is not through him you will get your freedom.

Margaret Atwood, *Orpheus* (1)

You walked in front of me, pulling me back out to the green light that had once grown fangs and killed me.

I was obedient, but numb, like an arm gone to sleep; the return to time was not my choice.

By then I was used to silence. Though something stretched between us like a whisper, like a rope: my former name, drawn tight. You had your old leash with you, love you might call it, and your flesh voice.

Before your eyes you held steady the image of what you wanted me to become: living again.

It was this hope of yours that kept me following.

I was your hallucination, listening and floral, and you were singing me: already new skin was forming on me within the luminous misty shroud of my other body; already there was dirt on my hands and I was thirsty.

I could see only the outline of your head and shoulders, black against the cave mouth, and so could not see your face at all, when you turned

and called to me because you had already lost me. The last I saw of you was a dark oval. Though I knew how this failure would hurt you, I had to fold like a gray moth and let go.

You could not believe I was more than your echo.