

Joanna Straughn

The Other

She still lives in a foreign country
Writing letters in seven languages
I never learned; her mind infinite
As the volumes in Borges' fantastical library.
When I hear her sing, the night fills
With footsteps and salt perfume.
She's asked for an envelope of dirt from home,
Though she wears the dust of a hundred cities with doves.
I left my suitcases at the train station
To enter the museum where her painting of an orchard
Hangs beside a Rembrandt and Vermeer.
She stands at the end of a narrow road
Between two rows of linden trees
Stretching out her clean, clairvoyant hands.