

## Lacrimosa

James King

I thought you were dead.

How long had it been since you  
or anyone else set foot in my room—  
the one you call, ironically, living?

There used to be a girl, right?

I could tell from her touch that her visits  
were obligatory. She was cute and dutiful  
and oh so consistent: When thirty minutes  
were up, I'd feel a puff of cool air chase  
a happy diminuendo of footsteps.

There was a boy, too.

His first visits were painful, but I endured  
because he was intrigued. We started  
talking and eventually, wonderfully, we began  
to sing together. He knew how to treat me.  
Where did he go? What did you do?

And you?

So determined at first to make us work. Years  
of the same conversations. And then, the grand  
hiatus. Only recently have you started visiting  
again, but the pauses are long. I feel your touch  
but I sense a longing for that nocturne  
you used to play. Badly.

Me?

I need you. But, please, try a jaunty invention.  
And you do know, don't you, that Bach  
wrote more than one prelude? You might consider  
a peppy sonatina or bagatelle. Let's keep our distance  
from jazz, shall we? It was never in your wheelhouse.  
And whatever you do, nothing in the key of E minor.  
That's when you grow silent, and I get the feeling  
that at any moment, the front door will bust  
open and two burly men will enter, armed  
with a dolly.

Copyright © James King

