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Adagio

Something—
a lotus?
an artichoke?—
blooms purple and teal
inside a frame.
Three windows encase
treetops dense with
June-green leaves.
One breath.
One breath
is audible.
Everything else is held
contained.
Adagio. Adagio.

She looks back.
The past is a castle burning.
Resigned
she looks forward.
The future is a sweating fetid jungle.
Better to stay in this safe ennui.
A piano playing only the middle keys.
Adagio. Adagio.

Look!
She can stretch.
Point.
Turn.
Spin.
But only inside this room.
Bars. Mirrors. No door.
She is pretty
protected
in this prison.
Adagio. Adagio.

She learns to live
inside her quiet heart.
Whenever she dares to glance

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at the horizon, the heavens
hands push her face
back to the floor
until she sees only
this moment
this place
this sentence.
Adagio. Adagio.

They say:
“Contained is better than
contaminated.
Empty is better than
dead.
Throw a rope
around the neck of
what else is possible.
It’s for the best.
Adagio! Adagio!”

She sits
looking out the window.
Feet still
dancing.

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