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If Only I Knew by Nelly Sachs

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Rebekah Wilson
If Only I Knew

Nelly Sachs
Wenn ich nur wüßte

If only I knew
what the last thing you saw was.
Was it a stone, that had drunk in
countless last looks, until, in blindness,
they fell on the blind?

Or was it earth,
enough to fill a shoe,
and already black
from so many partings
and causing so much death?

Or was it your final path,
bringing you farewells from all the paths
you had ever walked?

A puddle, a reflection in metal,
perhaps your enemy's buckle,
or some other small interpreter
of heaven?

Or did this earth,
which lets no one depart from here unloved,
send you a bird omen through the air,
reminding your soul that it flinched
in its pain-scorched body?