Reaching the palace

I've reached the palace. Resplendent, white,
no sign of life, clinical love: when the harbingers
of overwhelming pain scour the walls
leaving no trace of before, no clue to after,
only a sign of impending doom,
a palliative binge. No visitors! Half-fright,
half-dead, this is the sick room
where ache enacts fractals of agony,
when the nerve fires and fires, crying wolf,
and the brain-hag marshals what it has
and, every time, I stand at attention.

In love with allodynia, abraded connection
and false flag, O signalman, bury me release!
Throes: wracked. Wrecked. Wrought
with blunted thought and the kind of ascension
meant for martyrs dying on the cross,
this is loss, this is the exact naming of things,
this is pain's manse and pain's program
and I, suffused, ramshackle and beaten-down,
have no threshold except the bridal one
when pain steps across the gap
as summons and takes me away, very far away.

– *Shane Neilson*
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