Looks

*Sy sjocht as in brette âle yn de tange*

Those looks that can’t be classified.

No typology, no phases of the moon can explain them.

A look that travels through the circus rings of scalp and shoulders and triangle of trapezius, that crinks the bowel, that has the rider adrenal gland kicking the kidney.

*The look of an owl roasting in the tongs.*

A look Rembrandt in the Frick flings you, self-portraiture a criss-cross of straining lines in beefeater and fur and red sash and ochre, face-framing the empty cave of his eyes.

Alyda Faber
The ones you believe

Alle geasten moat men net leauwe

Don’t believe all spirits
just the ones

whose white hot teeth
afflict your spine

so you cannot
sit stand run

you burn cold

love’s temperature
this time round.

Alyda Faber
Grace unwitting

_Dèr't de hûn zyn sturt leit, is it skjin fage_

If God writes
with a child-thick marker…

Note this—bones
in sockets rotating, inner folds
digesting, electrical
fields balancing, vast interior
surfaces thrumming on—

but on _our_ surface
so much debit accounting—
ingk gauged
lines measured
exact, one thin-skinned tit
scratched on another’s tat—

But note this
_where the dog’s tail lies_
_the floor is swept clean._

Alyda Faber
Paperpants

*As mijn broeck ien pijper seck is.*

*When my pants are a paper bag* I’ll use them to make lists

—
elegant things, distressing things, and best of all, things
that ‘quicken the heart.’ A famous list-maker, Shonagon,
lady-in-waiting to Sadako, recommends this. Elegance:
grass bending in the wind, sunlight paddling through windy
leaves, un-armoured reply to a guns-out blazing meanness,
kindness moored on the ancient saying, *be kind—everyone
you see is fighting a great battle.*

Distress: the long aftermath

of a death, wishing
dead the undead parent,
wishing alive the dead
parent, the rages of an
infernal father hiding
love under piles of bones
for a bitter game of
hide-and-go-seek-and-
ever-find until the
corners of the room
begin to whiten out
in the psychiatrist’s
three-chaired bare
office, breathing
two arm-lengths
from clasping eyes.

Alyda Faber