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Monday, the sun rising across the gray packed-earth path,
he attached what he had to her email & hit send, just his notes
& an outline, declared there had been an emergency, what a shame
she didn't have more time, maybe she could make sense
out of what he had done, still make it to Harvard in the fall
where he now knew there was a great Chicago-style hotdog stand,
if it was still there—there would be no charge.
Or maybe the notes & outline would accrue to something else
in her brain, an irrational map pointing the way out of
a confined box with a small hole near the mouth to breathe through
or where something could be inserted—forceps or a letter
from her future self, rolled up like a Dead Sea scroll.

He drew out an old translation of Vilmorin:

Oh! The soft steps of the innocents,
their silences overbrimming
make so, make, make
make of an evening dance a country
where flames will converge.
These lovers met, so
the snow melts, the snow
melts, and melts, and melts.

And he thought he would finish the translation,
which was like a transforming, out of his wife's breath
something the shape of a hot meal they could share, something brilliant
in its use of bitter, at a small table against a window
where, having chosen the wine, its origin, he could begin
to explain what he had done & why, which would lead
to a question, the only one that mattered & ever would.