Something like home

I’ve often wondered what it took to get here—not my wintering spot in the prairies, flushed
with fescues, black and brown colors of soil, tall grasslands, wild rice or ice. Not the pursuit
of the unknown—the unfamiliar ghosts thronging us in dreams, the same pale daylight thoughts
that, right now, swarm my head, or ahead, a hundred vehicles jamming the different lanes
you could trace like dotted lines of impatience to some varied destinations. Do we always get
there? Not the physical ones that put miles on our cars or pins on our tires. Not the ones
that wring hugs off our chests, or pour ink on our tongues. I’m talking of a different one—
the intimate star within you that aches to shimmer one day in an imminent global night.

What would it take to get there? I may never know. But right here, it’s a different ride. My toddler
breathes warmly beside me as if whiffing out of my belly, and a newborn settles on my arms
like a song. It took countless trips flung across three continents to find the love that makes such moments.
But somewhere else, there’s a moment without this. What happens when we find ourselves there—no song or ballad, no bird or babble, just the last surviving shard of the will buoying up the head above the brutal ebbs and wilding waves that refuse to hush. You wouldn’t ask the soul in the water what it took to get here. You hurl a hand, and unfurl a land for two, and soon the one breathing beside you may be unknown, unfamiliar, the lost or broken or found, a stranger with a different tongue or color, and you could strike a conversation that fires, and at some ripe or older age, you could use that same flame, that same warmth—when the prairie throws its solitude and snows its building walls, and inside, when room doors fail to creak or hum, lights fail to leap or turn, and all you have are memories, plateful of journeys, the songs of barred owls breaking through the louvers to recite each line of every known love story to get you through the night.