

Swerves from the Passenger's Side: Montale Variations



Norman Weinstein

camphor trees decay, despite
 one's willingness to thrash in hell
 to flirt with many Beatrices –
 or to live locked in hell's chaste
 central holding tank
 for one –
 a 12 tone row
 guards
 & prevents
 early escape –
 in this life below
 or above,
 predators, not hummingbirds, I
 quipped, brow burning –
 if driving you would have killed
 us both instantly
 defying so embracing dividing
 walls

from a smoldering red flame within a pomegranate
 two notes flicker:
 harp strings snap /
 Eagle's beak or dove's clattering?
 I philosophized, but you
 began running with one sandal
 toward your errant shadow

.

Pooling emerald blood
 fountaining from a camphor tree
 no Eve dotes upon –
 bleeding a string section intensifies,
 screeching crescendo /
 slices camphor's trunk, cuts sawtoothed
 sustained chord –
 Psychotic? I assumed,
 any composer fevered with
 root-severing hysteria – but then, discover
 your body abruptly left the concert hall
 long before, prone on a cherrywood raft,
 composed from your decomposing
 patron's chair

.

no pedant's hubris confusing
 a cuckoo's from an owl's call
 risking sounding post –

postmodern flutter in peacock department,
 watch whose fan pokes whose eye
 out –

sounding lyre-lyrical
 bottomlines all they crave,
 those professing peacocks gunning

their Maserati engines full-throttle
 inside garage gaschambers,
 Locate one reader, Possible? This instant, one

severing cuckoo's sense from cuckold's,
 owl from staid senex. Give
 that reader a heartbreaking

necessity for living
 between the lines
 in a disintegrating gospel of their driving

record without
 a
 license to speak of

.
 is that scent of fake eucalyptus a warning?
 friction in some songs could break molecules
 apart – who sleeps with whom slyly
 titillates as folklore, but what does a camphor tree compel
 us to know of horizons?
 Driving into hovering dusk,
 a world of supposedly limitless horizons
 narrows to a flat EKG trace –
 Driving driven by thinking of your
 absence I
 accelerate to run over
 every ghost of you
 littering my by-dark
 destination, map dot
 about to stroll . . .
 becomes a line of unanswerable questions
 my life depends on,
 but yours?

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