

QUINTET

Translucent June,

and the fireflies are not yet out
but the slugs inch their way across
our confusing sidewalk toward
the solar system of our circular garden

with its red planet of verbena on
the sidewalk side to the blue Neptune
on the other. En route they pass
below giant clouds of columbine
for them it is a long long journey.

As I turn into the circle of houses
we call home I glance at the nine o'clock
horizon, and again the royal blue
of Hudson River sky a daub of gibbous moon
seems to let the sky through, coloring its
mountains and its craters.

STORIES UNDERGROUND

Churchyards lie
draped across green hills
here—the hamlets of England
and towns, cities,

The dead below concluded lives
in robes or tiny nightgowns—
their eyes just
stopped moving.

As Plantagenet, Tudor, Hanover kings
brooded in front of fires
long before,
at one small moment,
taking their last breaths,

So many lie
crinkled in their coffins
almost still.

their shapely days done—
milking the animals,
closing up account books,
chasing up the hill to the school bell,

brought down by
plague, childbirth,
a cut gone bad,
a riptide,

their faces never lit
by a computer screen
they never touched down
on a runway
heard a police-car siren.

They in their millions
float just beneath the Earth's crust
in oak boxes, or ash molecules
under their marble stones

We walk above them
laying daisies, roses,
or tossing chewed gum away by the sidewalk.

AMBUSH ME AGAIN: To M.

You with your hazel kestrel eyes
Your soft controlled explosions
You bring coffee, Benjamin Britten
is playing, your sweet agenda
is what, today, exactly?

We, we swam cold inlets
together, not knowing
whether we were in Canada
or [Maine side of Spednic Lake](#)
splashing back and across water borders.

You japed my gifts of osprey, jumping
silver pike, gliding oars, my unpicked
bouquet of purple lupins, Silurian pebbles
almost blue, beds of club moss soft under
your wet bare feet, you reached down for wild Sweet William.

I loved you in our island hut at night
past stepping barefoot on wild mushrooms,
Canadian cool at August's haunted end
the bright, *dark*- spun Milky Way
a loop of Ferris wheel, our foreplay.

Feb 15 2013

I saw you today
a blue pond
In a snow glade

the trees bare.
but the red twig
dogwoods electric

as if to say
that Valentine's Day
with its high expectations
has come and gone

But on this, the day after,
and the days after this
the red thrives on

so striking in winter
when not competing
with green leafy neighbors.

Toussaint, Muse, Revolution

Toussaint, *mon frere*, he tears away our chains
he starts at Breda in Seventeen Ninety One,
he terrifies the *blancs* who held us down
he lights the torches that are soon to spread
across the French plantations. For their pains,
cane sugar- slaves will change to men.
Their fury knows no bounds, we hear, and they
will slaughter those who made their lives white hell,
will occupy two thirds of Saint Domingue.
Eight years will pass and they will greet
invading French armadas with steel fists
from blazing musket fire in jungle heat.
Napoleon's men will fall like crumpled dolls,
and fever wilt them—desiccated meat.