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### **Penetrating Rilke's Borders**

"I wonder what being *you* is like."

Her words appeared  
unexpectedly  
amidst our ramblings over stepchildren and steps astray,  
flights cross country and of fancy,  
and an owl's opportune arrival.

In youth  
tangential lives seem one,  
her words meaningful  
only after decades' recognition that  
each of us  
weaves a personal palette  
into a custom-fit cocoon.

No one pierces through,  
all merely guessing at  
the internal cosmos of the other.  
In love, Rilke says,  
"two solitudes  
protect and border and greet  
each other."

*My* solitude is often  
darting,  
cacophonous,  
lightning-powered,  
and reality-bludgeoned.  
The mind's traffic cop routes insights,  
its architect renders fragile conclusions.

Or just as often  
activity slows—  
sluggish, molasses-laden.  
Wires down, power out!  
Relief only in the hope  
of the generator's cycle,  
the welcome lurch as we spring forward  
yet again.

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## **Compass Points**

Is it the right path?

As if only one were designated so,  
as if a turn could be genuinely wrong,  
immutable.

It's just a path,  
beckoning through future haze.

Excitement,  
apprehension,  
possibilities.

It's only a moment's choice,  
not a lifetime's.

Explore or stay,  
walk or sit,  
learn or stagnate,  
live or die.

It's just a path.

Take a step.

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## **Vacation**

I think,

“Time to return,  
time to renegotiate reality.”

As if this tranquil world  
of words,  
of thoughts,  
of feelings  
is *not* real,  
is *not* true,  
is *not* worth  
much.

I think,

These lives—  
our rhythms,  
our duties,  
our dances—  
are what we have constructed,  
how we have inverted,  
merely platforms  
that shelter and conceal  
the real.

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## **Misplaced**

Terrified of losing things.

It starts small:  
my son's swimsuit,  
the car keys,  
my wallet.

Distraction builds.

Distress infuses,  
overwhelms,  
signaling the urgency  
of what I still must learn.

Lose fear,  
Lose all,  
Lose self.

Yet gain perspective.

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### **What He Left Behind**

His estate totaled \$83.30.

Not much to live on,  
much less to die on.

A meager testament.  
But was it  
a valid measure of the man?

At first I thought it poignant, apropos—  
a harsh reflection of his capitulation.

And yet,  
no sum reflects the ripples he spawned,  
not even probate.

“For the benefit of Anna M.,  
Leonard D.,  
Lawrence W.,  
and Luanne Christine”