

SUNDAY AFTERNOONS  
for Ray Lindquist

Old English

I write as one who celebrates  
four of my childhood heavyweights,  
you, your Eliot, your Auden, your Yeats.

As one who in their etchings finds  
thirsty roots, branching minds,  
tree-lit trails. A hill that winds

down the mountain, along a dale  
(I expect I can ... I imagine I'll fail ...)  
eastwest of Dante, not far from the Grail.

Here a rune, there a rune,  
everywhere a tune, tune,  
some still find Byzantium  
an angelic land.

Waste Land  
for T.S. Eliot

Cruel, cruel  
to bring on lightning and an April

squall  
with your story

and then keep silent when we miss the point:  
that in the myth

you trudge us through,  
the desert starts to flower.

Your Garden Quartet,  
blossoming into Four.

*Sunday Afternoons* (for Ray Lindquist)

A poem for W.H. Auden  
(previously published, hence omitted here)

Aging  
for W.B. Yeats

You were a finisher  
of song  
watching the slowest syllable  
into place.

Not sure how that might have made  
a human newcomer feel.

Remarkably,  
your pen kept getting more obedient.  
And the will itself -- the soul  
back of it all?

Sunday Afternoons

Phyllis with her red hair  
(a leprechaun about to give birth,  
but sprightly),

and you, chortling in your rocking chair,  
sandpaper voice going back and forth  
lightly

over some angle until it's smooth,  
deepening this or that shadow slightly.  
There wherever my own lines appear.

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