

Mr. Mortimer Eismann plays "Springtime in Paris"  
Montreal, 1958

Scratchy record love, I met you.  
Senseless in the photograph on the wall,  
crooked from an over-loved house.  
Something between Bing Crosby and my father—  
never could place you.

She had a story for every piece of jewelry in that box.  
A different lover, a different ending.  
I always cry at endings.

I think I can see your piano—  
apartment filled with too many estate sales.  
Second wife— I heard she doesn't play at all.

Five-year-old tragedy, we cried from the beginning.  
*"I would like to introduce the next piece,"*  
Still loved you then, five year old not knowing.  
*"Mr. Morty Eismann playing Springtime in Paris."*

He never plays jazz unless we beg him.  
Too much of you and winter, cold—  
maybe the same thing.

But I've heard it's springtime in Paris, Morty. Take me to Paris in the  
springtime, Morty.

It's winter in Montreal.  
Would you have loved me in eighth notes?  
Or in rests?

I think I'll try to memorize for now.  
I hear the springtime is passing.

## Rachmaninov

In my room there are many things—  
The Birth of Venus, streaked  
black with squid-like ink;  
second-hand books, their 65 cent mark  
peeling stubbornly off.  
A paperweight painted by a woman  
who has since swam away  
from Prince Edward Island

I want to escape their collective dust,  
their worn-through chilly evenings and  
peeling-painted-clapboard house.  
There is something warmer and newer.  
Why does it have to always be so fucking cold?

I used to hear my parents talking through the wall.  
Never kissing and never in the dark.  
But, late one night,  
the radio playing through the wall—  
I heard a muffled whisper,  
“Rachmaninov!”  
“Our song!”

## Favorites

He always says Tom is his man.  
One of, if not *the*, best in literature.

*Why*, I ask.

Because he is strong  
and has leather boots  
and who does Daisy go with in the end?

It confuses me.  
Why not Gatsby?  
Why do I assume I'm Daisy?

Vanity!

And because quiet Joe Amato—  
Joe who recited Lowell with his eyes closed—  
stuck a green post-it to my forehead late one night,  
with “Daisy Buchanan” written in pen.

But that was before, of course,  
Joe jumped from a bridge,  
the freezing water enveloping him,  
like the water over Gatsby  
in the cool, late-summer  
Long Island pool.