

CAFÉ ROMA, 1988

She and I sit in intimate proximity  
in dappled sunlit shade of the  
climbing red Bougainvillea clinging to the wall behind us,  
arching over our table in the patio's corner of *our*  
café on Columbus Avenue.

Our patio, a fragrant pocket nestled within surrounding  
white wood apartments, aging well since rising from  
the Earthquake & Fire of 1906, their privileged widows  
overlooking lovers sipping Cappuccino  
as fragments of piano sonatas, Beethoven, Schubert,  
descend from a room above  
to envelop us.

We sit transfixed,  
She, in languorous repose, her full, sensuous lips  
beckon from her luminous face.  
Black hair cascades to her shoulders,  
her pneumatic body draped in ankle length linen skirt,  
and above, a black bodice modestly masking her fullness.  
I'm in pedestrian blue jeans and blue worker's shirt.

Summer fog streams through the Golden Gate,  
descends upon our patio to dampen our reverie.

Silence subsumes us, fingers entwine.  
This moment will not last forever.  
We did not last forever.

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## LOVE LOST AND FOUND AGAIN IN THE TIME OF COVID

If I had said in 1992,  
to the first Love of my Life,  
You can trust me  
not to betray you--again.

If She had welcomed me back, and said,  
Please do come back,  
We'll try again.

If She had welcomed me back,  
we would have faced the Plague  
together, lying in bed,  
saying Goodnight, Sleep Well.  
And together we would prevail,  
as the Plague spits  
its fumes against our gate.

She did not welcome me back.  
She said No,  
Why should I trust you again?  
I cannot bear the pain of  
uncertainty--again.

Now I lie in bed with another,  
the second and last  
Love of My Life,  
saying Goodnight, Sleep Well.  
Together we will prevail,  
as the Plague spits  
its fumes against our gate.

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## THE PORCELAIN ROOM

We drive through the Presidio,  
the eighteenth-century army base,  
to The Palace of the Legion of Honor  
atop the headland overlooking the Pacific.

Outside, Rodin's *The Thinker*,  
dominating the parking lot.

Outside, Summer in San Francisco.

From inside the porcelain room,  
its floor to ceiling French windows  
reveal an enchanted landscape,  
rolling lawn set among trees  
formed and leaning eastward against  
the ocean winds,  
engulfed in swirling fog hurtling in  
from the Pacific.

Inside the gleaming porcelain room,  
fingers entwined we stroll together meditating  
on the shapes, glazes, and colors of myriad vases,  
dining sets, figurines from centuries of  
French art.

The porcelains are magical but overwhelming.  
After an hour we tire. Too much to absorb at one visit.

We haven't tired of one another. Together, we gleam luminous,  
like the porcelains. Time to return home love to make love.

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## I LEFT HER ALONE

I left her at twelve thousand feet to sleep alone at Wotan's throne,  
the granite colossus astride the climb to Mt. Whitney's summit.  
Alone she sits among white, raw relentless clouds.  
amid the crags of the Sierra Nevada.  
Frosty sunshine reams her marrow like a laser.  
As she slips away, she yearns for a sunny spot  
in which to bask in meager warmth,  
like a worm, in peach pulp womb warmth.

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## CLOUDS

Swiftly moving clouds,  
the prelude to a storm,  
turbulent mists sweeping the crest of their verdant background,  
the Berkeley Hills.

Rolling and plunging mists which, as they race across a gray sky,  
revive their ascent with sudden upward thrust.  
Then each cloud reaches the zenith  
of its swirling crescendo  
with an immense, energetic surge,  
only to roll over with the resistance of the air currents  
and plunge again to the crest of the hills,  
before resuming their dramatic ritual of natural ferment.

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