

TOY SYMPHONY

Palms and fiery plants populate the glorious
levels of the unrecognizable mountains.

Valéry, *Alphabet*

Out on the terrace the projector had begun
making a shuttling sound like that of land crabs.
On Thursdays, Miss Marple burped, picking up her knitting
again, it's always Boston Blackie or the Saint—
the one who was a detective
who came from far across the sea
to rescue the likes of you and me
from a horde of ill-favored seducers.

Well, let's get on with it
since we must. Work, it's true
suctions off the joy. Autumn's density moves down
though no one in his right mind would wish for spring—
winter's match is enough. The widening spaces
between the days.

I sip the sap of fools.
Another time I found some pretty rags
in the downtown district. They'd make nice slipcovers,
my wife thought, if they could be cleaned up.
I don't hold with that.
Why not leave everything exposed, out in the cold
till the next great drought of this century?
I say it mills me down,

and everything is hand selected here: the cheeses,
oranges wrapped in pale blue tissue paper
with the oak-leaf pattern, letting their tint through
as it was meant to be, not according to the calculations
of some wounded genius, before he limped off
to the woods.

The stair of autumn is to climb
backward perhaps, into a cab.