

Beside her like a whisper.
I work all the quick hooks
Of light, the same unbroken
Rhythm my father taught me
Years ago: *Always give
A man a good day's labor.*
I won't look. The engine
Pulls me like a dare.
Scent of honeysuckle
Sings black sap through mystery,
Taboo, law, creed, what kills
A fire that is its own heart
Burning open the mouth.
But I won't look
At the insinuation of buds
Tipped with cinnabar.
I'm here, as if I never left,
Stopped in this garden,
Drawn to some Lotus-eater. Pollen
Explodes, but I only smell
Gasoline & oil on my hands,
& can't say why there's this bed
Of crushed narcissus
As if gods wrestled here.

SPRINGTIME JITTERBUG

A torpid eye squints open, hungry
For spring, as lovers walk hip to hip.
Another eye peers from a knothole,
& underneath a crescendo of leaves

A new heart begins to plea with the soil.
Something unseeable sings open the flawed mouth,
Harmonizing with Ella & Satchmo as "I Won't Dance"
Spins on the turntable. A thrush

Unravels its song like a blind stitch
Holding night & day together. Some mantra
Calibrates the primary colors into focus,
Till the hills are jazzed beyond

April's blue absolution,
Beyond doubt, like a hydrogen star falling
To burn out a hundred years
After we're dead.

EUPHONY

Hands make love to thigh, breast, clavicle,
Willed to each other, to the keyboard—
Searching the whole forest of compromises
Till the soft engine kicks in, running

On honey. Dissonance worked
Into harmony, even-handed
As Art Tatum's plea to the keys.
Like a woman & man who have lived

A long time together, they know how
To keep the song alive. Wordless
Epics into the cold night, keepers
Of the fire—the right hand lifts

Like the ghost of a sparrow
& the left uses every motionless muscle.
Notes divide, balancing each other,
Love & hate tattooed on the fingers.