

driving, drumming on the dash.
Now that he's gone
they deal decisively with vegetables.

My pockets clink
with jeweler's tools, obscene
secrets I use on my own marriage.

I wish
you would go home
where you can't hear them.
I wish you would go away
from the very fact of my happiness.

He left you because your teeth are even.
He left you because a high wind hit Sumatra.
He left you because your eyes are green.

Vivaldi in Early Fall / John Engels

O this is what it is to be
Vivaldi in September, in my
forty-sixth year, the pines
just beginning to sing
on the hillsides, the rivers
coloring with the first rains
(which are, as usual, precisely
on time). And there is also

this young girl, who, each year,
I bring into my mind,
making it to be that if she knew
by what measure I considered her,
she would turn and look at me and smile,
thinking, "It is the priest again,
the one with red hair, who is said
to make music, and who—as every year—

has gone a little sweetly crazy,
and I think he may love how I am today
in my blue dress." And she
is right. In September I am moved
to the melancholy theme: I like to make the cello
sing with the pines, be on the verge
of the thunderously sad. And, as always,
at this time, I would like to make the melody

go on forever, but cannot, being cursed
to disdain of my narrow lusts
and sorrows. I have never said
that with me an innocent angel is alone
at work: it may be I exercise
the murderous grace. But in September
the face of God
passes through my walls to show me
how the motion of song sleeps
at the center of the world, as, indeed,
among the Angels, innocent of time. I hear

at this time every year the voice that loves me
crying out *return, return!* and I do, I round
on the beginning in full belief:
and the girl is gone having never breathed
as I breathe, in the weary
exactitude of matter. The song
stops at the certain moment
of its growth. It is
the truth of me, not any lie
that I imagine, and I
can do nothing with it. Still,

it is Autumn, and over the whole world
the air resumes its liveliness, and I,
Vivaldi, possessed of love and confidence
in measure wonderful to me, I seek
to magnify the text: *viola, bassoon, cello*,
and it is as if the trees have broken into song,
that the song roots, blossoms, thrusts
deep toward the still center, and overspreads
the sky like a million breathing leaves.