

LIEDER

*Here is a little song to comfort you.
Sing it to yourself softly, simply, just as you are.
—Robert Schumann to Clara Schumann, July 1840*

His scent still rose off my skin.
My pores exuded the impress of his hand
and my throat whimpered want, when
the bouquet of songs arrived, bound
by a single chord, which I plucked, spilling
sheaves, all their cadent, radiant content.

I his rapture, I his pain. He mine.
He said light hit the water like a cadenza
that day, but his soul would not resist
the shadows of the bridge, its counter melody.
Now, as behind me each door slams, bolts,
I only meet what beats in him

in the tremolo of my larynx
or the dark corridor of the keyboard.