

## Late August

Shadows throw long on the dampened grass  
Crickets sheltering beneath  
Sing of the dying season  
Soon they will be silent too  
The cold comes early here in Wisconsin

Back East you'd hear them clear through October  
A chorus rising like steam  
From beneath the late-blooming honeysuckle at  
Skillman and 46th  
Brown and sadly withered  
And clinging to a chain link fence

In the streets  
A speeding car blaring reggaeton  
Launches a wake of desiccated leaves  
That scours the grime off the street and into your face  
And the flattened gingko fans  
Eddied on the curb  
Mark their meager territory  
Beside dog shit and candy wrappers  
Farther down  
In the smoke of after-dusk  
The smell of cumin  
And a tendrilled melody  
Spill from the glow of a second-floor window  
Landing like a silken shroud  
On sidewalks caked with chewing gum  
That border the night-still bakeries and barbershops  
Owned by the newly arrived with their diasporic tongues

Tonight my sleep will be fragmented  
By the groans of the Wisconsin & Southern  
Inching through town a mile or two from here  
And tomorrow I'll rise late  
And head to the garden  
To see what's left to eat  
Though I've let the arugula go to seed for the bees  
Who swarm their spicy blossoms

I had a friend long ago  
(For what it's worth) she was a star of stage and screen  
We were in Cornwall in the month of January  
That part of England being surprisingly balmy

And dotted with fat palms  
She spoke rapturously then about the sound  
Of the wind through the trees  
How banal, I thought

Last week in the garden  
The sudden stirring  
Of leaves overhead  
Moved me to tears

That night in my dreams  
A full moon rose

### **This Winter Will Pass**

The thaw soothes the  
Flattened grass  
Emerging from half-melted snow  
A rosebush reaches its pruned branches skyward  
While the cyclamen bursts its hot confections  
Like fireworks against a mid-summer night  
The newly glistening days  
Give promise of spring

## Supermarket

Shopping cart full:

Onions, carrots, potatoes  
Three loaves of bread  
Boxes of pasta for sagging shelves  
At the bottom, fragments of memory

Anger and shame  
The smell of coffee

Things borrowed  
But never returned

The weight of her purse  
Its stitching unraveled

A radio confiscated  
In childhood

Her hands are still stained with  
The Frusinate earth  
A bequest from the Apennines  
To the port of Philadelphia a century ago

Back home the ghosts of war  
Peer out from walls marked  
By bullets that rained  
From the abbey at Monte Cassino

And the footfalls of *ciocie* bear softly upon  
The cobblestones of Via Porta Abasso

A world away  
A red wine dialect flows like rivers

