

Adrienne Ho

Green

There is a *long cold green*
evening of spring

like a delicate worm
nestled in your arm.

The smell of green
spreading like a heat,

a moss, a stain
of green tea and lips

flicking wet over dew
on morning grass.

Green like buds and
the burst of new leaves in sunlight,

the explosion in your eyes.
It's your favourite colour

this green green, pure
green as laughter.

Green lint on your bedsheets
leaving cotton traces

and the aftertaste
of green in the afternoons.

Root green veins in your hands
branching out branching in

like the seed in your heart
sprouting tendrils.

(The italicized lines stem from Elisabeth Harvor's book, The Long Cold Green Evenings of Spring, Signal Editions/Véhicule Press, 1997)

Goldberg, Reprise

of space, connected to nothing, touching
nothing. Gould's fingers on ivory keys.
It isn't Bach he's playing
from the grave, the stopped heart.
-Lorna Crozier, *The Goldberg Variations*

It's that time
of year you don't have time
for me. When everything is beginning,
budding green and new, something
dulls the burnished glass between
our clasped hearts, placing
wide eyes on meticulous lines
and splotted ink. I can't help
but feel a decaying
of space, connected to nothing, touching

my own limp fingers. What is there
to hold now that your hands
are occupied? My wrist bones
are hollowed like a rest, a break
over the barline, slow
as a musical ease
at the end of a phrase. Always
ending, perhaps with a bow, a folding
at the waist that seizes
nothing. Gould's fingers on ivory keys

resemble your own intrinsic pose,
hunched and swaying, making women swoon
at the first note sounded.
You wear gloves in July and soak
your hands just like him;
his pill-popping
habit crouches around the corner
of your life and there's too much blood
in your brain, waiting.
It isn't Bach he's playing

and you play your own
imagination recorded on tape
for me because you wanted me
to have something, each voice
of this lifelong fugue giving way
to the next part.
I swear you're his incarnate
and I'm the one he never fell in love with.
But I suppose it's too late now to start
from the grave, the stopped heart.

Concert

I watch his head beat out the rhythm
on the air, hair in his face, wet with sweat,

feeling his resistance to push it back.
He wears no watch, is timeless. Yet his fingers

age to frailty. I remember their touch on my skin, warm and pressing slightly, tickling like spider legs.

He doesn't see me now, under his bright lights,
stuffed in starch white, buttoned cuffs and Italian shoes.

Though he knows I'm here.
I'm always here, legs and arms crossed, breathing in hard ivory,

swallowing my heartbeat. I know when to applaud,
I've heard it all before. In living-rooms, bathrooms, bedrooms,

under the sheets I know when he is
done.