

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Jeremy Cantor: Three Poems

Jeremy Cantor · Wednesday, April 18th, 2018

### A Toast

Here's to the song you heard when you  
were falling in love but have forgotten  
the title and the tune and the lyrics  
so even if you fell in love to  
some other song you'll  
think this song is that song.

Here's to the way your heart  
shunted your brain onto a side track  
and left it where you would have to go  
and find it and drive it back into town  
the next day or the next year or  
maybe not ever.

Here's to the way the morning sun  
through the curtains on the kitchen window  
during breakfast the morning after  
suddenly made you think not of Vermeer  
but of Edward Hopper.

Here's to the surface of the water that  
has already crossed into night trying to  
reflect the evening sky's indigo but instead  
showing you a color you have no name for  
that promises quiet if only you will  
slip beneath the surface past the point  
where you'll hear water lapping at your ears  
to where eyes closed or eyes open  
is all the same.

\*

### What You Don't Know

it feels like the season's last rain  
the last rain before the living sweet green

on the hills turns first to the golden brown I love  
then to the grey brown I don't understand

the still night air encourages a cloud  
of the orange tree's scent

to come out of hiding, envelop the house,  
creeping even as far as my open window

around the corner on the south wall  
if you stood by me you would not smell it

they could not figure out how else to stop  
the little girl's nosebleeds so they cauterized

and left scar tissue covering the nerves  
now seventy years later I can count on one hand

the number of things you can smell  
and that number does not include

the smell of orange blossoms at night  
or the smell of the rain that is about to fall

\*

## **There Is Nothing Like A Berkeley Estate Sale**

her microscope (brass barrels)  
her short-wave radio (vacuum tubes)  
her slide rule (ivory-faced)  
her mechanical polar planimeter (does anyone still make those?)  
one copy of every journal her work appeared in

books inscribed to her by most of the famous people in her field  
boots, butterflies, black and white photographs  
boxes of things I looked at for an hour  
but can't recall

a monkey's skull studded all over with  
round silver ornaments like upholstery tacks

sheet music for piano  
an oboe reed  
an mbira  
a djembe

dictionaries in four languages

novels in three  
poetry in two

dust the agent missed when cleaning for the sale

two shelves of journals  
with entries in two different hands  
except for the last volume  
with entries in hers only

a wedding ring

her underwear which of course  
she needed until the day she died  
but there was no one left who  
cared enough to get rid of it  
before the sale

back at the car you said *“Please, love—  
don’t let that happen to me.”*

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