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## With Diurnal Mathematic

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## WITH DIURNAL MATHEMATIC

With diurnal mathematic,  
 let us regulate our day. . . .  
 Is this the alchemist's trick  
 then, this hieroglyphic roundelay?

We have checked all the surveys.  
 We have considered the route of rivers,  
 the course of bays,  
 like good explorers in a new country.

And not on any of those days  
 we checked the old surveys  
 has the center of our azimuth  
 found what LaSalle found in the youth  
 of exploration.

The old land  
 is not here, has not been here  
 within the eye's attesting  
 for many a month and many a year.

and this strange new face  
 pock marked with lakes; and rivers  
 showing through its skin  
 seems not the womb of place

the annals and the charts  
 our schooling opened to us  
 have described.

Set the transits  
 then, and let us see.

this new equation's bright topography.  
 Let us find new plateaus for  
 our forts; new mouths of rivers  
 at our continent's front door.

The wild wind, and the wild rain,  
the storm, and much sea change,  
have given another face  
to this our world.

and we must learn anew  
the coy creases of its smiles,  
what dimples show  
at what degree of coquetry.

Henry Clay was a great man  
in his day, but not today;

the surveys have been checked  
and it's not the same topography.

Calhoun, Webster, Wilbur Wright,  
and Thomas Edison, warm colors  
in old books but not today, not  
today: there is a different desperation.

Adjust the vertical to the libido  
and see what then the azimuth  
will hold its vortex on. Adjust  
the vertical to sound and see

whose name's impaled upon that  
vertical line.

Tweedle de dum, dweedle de dee;  
the world has changed and so have we:  
and mostly do not care  
which end of the stair

to continuing eternity  
we build our pylons on,  
or even if we build.

The river and I have held  
close company this month  
watching great battleships  
and merchant ships, and the  
calm ritual of desperation  
go down to sea. . . .

desperation checking the  
old surveys,

and finding them lacking,  
and never, not even once,  
doubting that our calculus  
will right it all.

KENNETH L. BEAUDOIN

### M O T H E R

Let it be told—a woman in our time,  
once incipient seed in a sturdy girl who saw Lincoln,  
now mother of other seeds. Her bones are older  
than a halved century; they remember much pain.  
In her are many deaths: she beholds a lost family  
in a mind ranged hill after hill with old griefs.  
Her time comprehends our world. She has seen progress  
deliver her to three wars. In the grotesque tale  
she who knew woman's blood before Kitty Hawk,  
now watches the moon's clouds for the diving of death.

I saw this woman in the year my haggard father,  
ravaged with imminent mortality, lay unknowing  
and talked recovery, his poor life raveled away.  
Intolerable gulfs opened in her then. Stone mask  
kept no secret closer than she serving him, loving,  
inscrutable, to his wistful death.

She is aged like a hickory and yields not.  
This is the solace: old worths,  
The people indomitable.

WILL GIBSON