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Two Poems

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AGAINST SENTIMENT

(for Jocelyn and C. Brown)

Don't fear the loss of houses
and furniture. A piano
is an old and awkward piece.
Set your mind on the slow curve
of the Lamoille, a river walk
on thin morning frost. Remember
the smell of the LaHouya farm, coffee
in your kitchen, mounds
of cucumber, the scent of apples
that near knocked you over.
Find your initials
on any bridge railing and walk
the woods in winter. Love someone new
in the still-warm imprint
of deer. And when you sleep, search out
the sheets' cold corners,
hunker down
into the night.

REVELATION

(for H.C.)

In a moment, you will be there,
through the back pasture and over
that last hill.

He will wait for you
on the front stoop, watch you
as he calls his pet goose,
breathes deep his Revelation tobacco.

Then, after a moment, he will grasp
the screen door handle, open it
slow and deliberate as the packing
of his pipe. He will offer you
a chair, one next to the fire,
the sharp crack of apple wood. And he
will take your poems one
by one, gather them like onions
his wife braids by the shed.

And in a moment, he will give
you coffee, a warm slice
of apple bread. You will know:
There is nothing to fear
from a man who drips butter, nothing
of those quiet rages with drink, or hard times
in Waterbury. Days aren't marked
like lines on a quick diminishing bottle. Writing,
he says, is just this cabin,
more tobacco in your pipe.