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THE MINISTERING

ANGEL

For my Family (for their patience.)

Skin.

Not in the “Buffalo Bill” way but the Ingres way,
the *La Baigneuse de Valpinçon* way;
in that silent way,
that patient and cold way,
that cryptic way.

That way smoke drifts
like the moon
sleeping on a grain stack,
and those hemline skirts
sifting through the primavera afternoon.

That quiet way; a Modigliani way.
The way with frosty park benches
and hollow blank nights
for sarcastic laughs,
yet it all seems so real to me.

In that bathtub way, you know?
When you clutch the locks
with the palms of your hands
and you are able to understand the purpose of light,
of friends and far away acquaintances,
of white socks and snow storms,
of altar boys and

the adopted face of God.

That is the way
she comes to me
in my phosphorescent progress
that helps me understand that
we love too much and not enough.
There is no paradox or compromise
that folds the strings together.
And the moment
the doors are closed
and the curtain is hung,
I finally know that the dream has begun.

This is not a clap, not an engine.
Not an elevation for a summertime fling.
There is fire in that sunken cathedral.
And in this way,
if you undo all these buttons,
you will eventually be gone.

In this way
the bottlenecks will come
to slave away your personality
as blood curdles in sand
like fireworks on the 4th of July.
The small talking under the groves
becomes complacent like a thick blanket,
and the analogy
'Love is a two way street'
purports absolution:
 you on one, I on the other,
 and our meeting on the tar
 as we anxiously wait to be
 collected by a rusty broken hatchback.

It is now and only now
as you sit on this great frame
that all Ways become a catharsis.
No faucets or tracks

nor large paperback stacks
can mask the demise of this affinity.

Skin.

Not in the “Buffalo Bill” way but the Ingres way,
the *La Baigneuse de Valpinçon* way.

All the paths are vacant
but every door is closed.