

Michael Davidson / THREE POEMS

SUMMER LETTERS

"The i's are skillful, distinguished and clever, have many pointed weapons, and live in caves, between which, however, there are also mountains, gardens and harbors."

— Melanie Klein

The l's live in caves under the earth,
down here, it's summer
and hotter than anything else,

when it was winter
we did all the work
and nobody disturbed us,

the letters were written
in the cool mornings
and by the afternoon

they were received
and nobody cared
how;

the i's and e's ride together
on a motor scooter,
they know where they are going

(into the wind probably),
they love one another
with a tenderness quite unknown

in the real world,
these are not my words
but those that summer gives me

in order to create love
as my cat creates another, larger cat
to hiss at,

“hiss” is made out of an agreement
between wind and tongue
not to recognize their limitations,

the way memory and summer
reveal their terrible affinities
while speaking separate dialects,

I wish the poem of satisfaction
would write me a letter
as though I had written to E

in the full flush of their conjoining
as in neighbor and weigh
where friends share a sieve

where there is little to remember
but stormy days
I would have a house of my own

words, and they would comfort
as you do
living between us,

for now, great uncertainty strides
across the film of sea
erasing all distinctions

I need
you fill
we move.

CONCRETE EXAMPLE

White fishing boat on thin strip of blue
seen above green fence on any day
but today is important
because it coincides with this
“concrete example”
in which the importance of history
must be sustained
in the face of the facts,
“the facts”
are on sale in any small country
dependent on us for aid, and “us”
is who ever believes them,
the fishing boat achieves a trajectory
of self-interest in variable space,
all it has left
is its wake.

FROM *THE NEWS*

Tally: more hand guns in American hands
than dishwashers, more dishwater
than water,
erasures cover more of the page
than words, more decisions
than desires, more presidential hopefuls
than people hopeful,
more wheat than breadwinners, money
than gold, prisoners
than guards, workers
than anything to do,
events splayed among meanings
given for them,
its new cape
wears the wrong women,
many women
among men's eyes
in this movie, in others
other combinations, inversions,
retrograde, among stars
a swan, seven sisters
an archer
the results are in.

I wanted the present tense
to make clear where we are
as if we were,
where small boats and their wakes
give distance to the channel
otherwise windy, a fog bank
lying offshore and beyond,
in that place the poem always inhabits,
a house with small rooms,
large enough to fall away
in daily sight
where a cautious cat sniffs
and enters this window.

A late quartet late at night,
glass of water, glasses
and their eyes,
too late to read "your nipples
are like rose buds, phone jacks," work
has destroyed them
needed to perform minute arabesques
in C minor
when he was already deaf
and Napoleon was Second,
by this time
even the silence is silent
in my little house of peach stones
apple cores and raisins,
brandy has a kind of hum
longer than taste,
you hear everything
in your head
including everything.

It is quantity
despite what you say about the monastic life,
guitars and whatever else
creates beauty in paper cups.

Screaming at each other, they
located a common point of agreement.

Staggering into the street,
still clutching the knife,
he agreed he had
loved her.

And the hounds go out after the fox
that the human eye can hardly see
and so the invention of the hunt
creates a need for hunger
which compared to the beach
with its bright flags of bodies
brings down the meat,
and we know who holds the gun, fangs
create a kind of smile
before the bite, non-metaphysical
and let me tell you
dear St. Jerome
kept a lion in the window
in case.