

Prayer

Kevin Hart¹

Dark One, I come to you by stepping back
Into a world of pawpaw scented air,
Tied with a string that's broken here and there
By boats that cut entirely loose and crack

The massive, tender picture of the world;
Rosella, butcherbird, and lorikeet
All speak the ancient language of wet heat;
And a lazy river sleeps beneath charred wood.

I stand here, Dark One, on a narrow ledge
Before a life I know full well and you,
Before a longing for that life and you,
And tell myself that stepping back an inch

Would bring me close to you, as I once was,
When crumpled water showed its dark, wild life
And brooding morning shadows held me safe
And everything was overfull with us.

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The Deer

In a dark wood
The deer look out
Across the road
And at the other side;

Deep in a moment
Lit from within
The deer say Yes!
And flee across the road.

(The family
Is driving home
Warm in their lives
Past the dark wood

Into the moment
When they look out
Right at the deer
And at the other side.)

Summer

It was a fat ripe pear, that summer day,
And we were wading through it, kissing some,
With nothing much to do but be in love
And vaguely loll around the riverbank

With loose and lazy smells of thick young grass
Just freshly cut, and starred with finest rain—
The city pouring out its pawpaw light,
That light now half-fermented after lunch:

My eyes went barefoot, running after you,
And found you everywhere, and then our hands
Went slowly wild in unforgiving heat.
(The stones kept half our secrets hidden tight.)