

Nostalgia

I would not take it from the poor,
The leaf-boats racing into the throat of a storm drain,
The bed, darkness and the children made upon it,
The small, open-air bar in Ponce, Puerto Rico
Where a deaf man dances to a tune his mother sang to him
Before some drunk god pinched the lit match
And flame of this man's hearing. If I must explain
To you how a deaf man can dance to music,
Then I must also explain to you darkness
And how deer *move among the winter trees, so much*
The color of the trees, they hardly seem to move. So darkness,
The woman next me in a black dress touching what moves
Inside her womb for the first time. So darkness,
The drunken man stumbling over the stump of a tree
As I once stumbled over several savage magnolias
And the bodies swaying in them at no particular angle
As is the case of winter fruit in spring—so darkness,
Under sorrow, lugging itself up to me, with its winter
Coats piled atop its unwashed shoulders, its breath
The odor of dead geese rotting beneath the thinning ice,
Spring bouncing about us in the unmeasured grass
Unaware of the ice storm flailing and stumbling down the coast,
The oranges on the trees in Florida flinching
On their branches as if they, too, understand their own death
Is upon them and so move in anticipation of it
As I move now, toward the woman in the black dress,
Toward her hands covering a darkness some may call light,
A child, Persephone-d, her eyes sealed shut
Until the appointed hour where the skin breaks
And she spends the first of her life drowning. I ask:
What god would begin his love for a body like this?
And why would you give this bounty to the dead, I hear a voice ask.
Because the living have always belonged to the dead first.