

# The Composer\*

for Donald Harris, my father

A permanent occasion  
knotted into notes: red and black  
like an Aztec burial, or colorless

in kelp, fingering the shore.  
You feel hardened from clef to tone,  
the chorale carried off by applause.

Other times, half of you is torn  
at the perforated line and mixed with mail.  
You want to say, "today, the prodigies

must fend for themselves,"  
and know apocryphal decibels,  
to count on thin sheets,

growing thinner by degrees, taking its own  
sweet time and taking us with it,  
to navigate magnetic zones in which

stark ecstatic figures touch, like worlds,  
but don't collide, it being their devotion  
to depend on you to name for each a

proper sphere. Today, I turn to silence,  
the retina and ears, dissolving in fugues,  
adagio the unknown, and tonal strain,

and days when wind is a bridge across  
our power to enumerate, to dig, to plant, to hold,  
and communicate gravity's coldness

toward games of enticing the score,  
as if we could erect a rival sphere  
whose uniform destination can't surprise,

is blind, pivotal,  
when on those white afternoons,  
I take your eyes, and see the sun set twice.

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