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DRAFT B-2

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Canto

There was that time in the orchard when you reached
Your mother's hand to pick a blushing pear,
Or her shoulders tensed while frantically you searched
For something in your bag that wasn't there—
There was that time I saw you, in her hair,
—And you saw her too: how it bothered you,
The wariness of what you were aware,
A knowledge like a body we grew into,
Our bodies aging into bodies that we knew.

When you saw me walking with my father's gait,

Or the way his brows unfurl from mine like flags,
How my voice drops down, or how I gain his weight;
When nose grows into prow, and the jaw line vagues,
The body's more a horse with saddlebags
Than a fading mansion, whatever Shakespeare says,
I feel it on the run when my lumpy ass drags,
A penultimate forecast. But in its place
I pose a change continually deserving praise.

How Eros fills us, makes us young again,
The face in pleasure smoother, softening,
The eyes like coals increasing without gain,
dark star of knowledge without the questioning.

He makes the present what it's always been,
To want each other, shedding as we go,
Like fiddler crabs moving backward on the sand.
Two sounds, two vowels merging in stereo,
The way you can hear "two" inside the undertow.

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But if he stalls change (or rather changes us
Into ourselves again), night turns to day,
And we turn to making beds and sandwiches

For kids who never eat them anyway,
Just as we didn't. Is it possible to say,
Then, that we're becoming what we want to be?
Partners in time-travel, with roles to play
In the changing play of mutability,
Or the muted sounds caressing a line of poetry.

Romantic, no? But Minerva makes us go
Further still than easy Eros ever will
(I'm mixing Greek and Roman gods, I know)—
That life is forward lived, that is until

Our understanding rises like a foal
On shaky legs and looks back for its mother
Gone already to graze another hill,

To stand alone in every kind of weather.

Thus we separate and lose ourselves to come together,

One body from another like a line
Of verse you hear that hasn't yet been written
But echoes with the echoes of the mind,
Revealing speech containing more that's hidden,
A plentitude that speaks of final famine.

Can perfection hide in imperfection's change,

And gifts imply another thing that's given?

With bodies joined and moving like a hinge

May we open doors, to step out to the further range.