



Image from The Spruce

Richard deFuria

Swale Runnel

*Am a hhwhat?  
a running pool of photons, quick  
ether surrounding cabbages  
magically I drag on vines, no  
stinky “slough” backed up.*

Years, who knew? What insight then to see  
about this mallow, slight, slight, an eddying...

*The breeze, man, some truck shifting  
down; I move invisibly. A pearlstring  
museum—blood maple leaves, the white pine’s  
needle drop—my specimens. A mussel shell;  
mantid egg-case on its twig. Trésors.*

Voilà, wormy kale, some rot and weeds,

a barrowful—for filling in.

*A crime. Your underground Mercury here  
before asphalt and SUV's, before French hussars  
hurdled over to hook up with Washington  
I ran here. Unsuppressible. I'll run out time  
I'll run through you.*

These regnant elms do... salaam you  
courtierly. No hog wallow, eh?

*Another thing: I brook no fish. Unless  
crayfish are fish. For which also I'm  
a temple of frogs hereabouts. They skedaddle  
your summer fields—yes, those egg clouds of spring!  
as I cake up black (it's a bluff) with algae.*

A trickster hollow, fine.

*Salamanders, new lodgers as I rise  
Houdini-esque  
from mudcracks fall afternoons  
(a quicksand slurry is their winter throw)  
and the red eft leaves my skirts, climbing  
for slats of rose through the trees.*

... swale runnel, then?

*Humans; speech.  
Kiss me, sycamore swags.*

## Preface to a Getaway

*Lacrimae rebus sunt —Virgil*

Oh, just yet? tickets sent  
our carillons one breakfast time  
coy and strict, like child rhymes;  
magical bookings  
to a spot where Februaries  
open muffiny warm. Why not  
—tears for things? A floppy satchel...  
toss in chocolates, trash to read  
rum, come on

An antique train  
an angler of malls and cinema lots  
facades with outdoor stairs, fenced-in

children yards, shopper mobs—  
the frantic back of things—takes us  
                                  ha! yes we were theirs  
on in a double silence, touching just.  
Bends and leans. A day and its night, our hour  
in palimpsest glass, glimpsed breaks  
to possible towns. “No, no maybe-me’s,”  
she’s smiling, “stop-offs at your peril.”

How slow though  
to absence, like exotic fruit  
on the mouth. *Venite*, latitude of winter  
trumpets; tar, damp, salt creature smell,  
desiccation, come. Austral closeness,  
wrap us. Our way narrowing to peninsula,  
wave troughs, hammered brass  
either side. Slow and slower...  
chests tight, we step down.

Small evening. Calm on an iodine sea.  
Steps to our inn: a ceiling fan; sheets  
myrrh’d and taut. And this—a pyx?  
for compounds of one’s choice,  
suppose; for arresting time.  
Let’s have chocolates—and a shot.  
Odd; no mirrors, too. Who is seeing?  
A chocolate and a sip. From our terrace  
there by the maritime walk, the iodine sea,  
an atelier. We’ll get our portraits done.  
Mornings, for a stroll nude to the beach.

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