

The diligence of your madness

Edward Hamlin

i.

The diligence of your madness
intermittent, liquid,
yielding to persist
through seasons of despair

Hilarity
the broken branch
that never falls

How long we've forgotten
your rhythm
your precision of taste
the dense matter of your intellect
severed now from reason
but no less superb

ii.

It couldn't be clearer:
the journey south was ill-conceived
disastrous
an interior descent without drama
or even the redemption
of a backward glance

We let you leave alone
with no guide but an old film
you adored
without muse or protector or Portuguese
without a nose for danger

And yet you survived Rio
scarred by larceny but whole
and found your way to Paraná

broken by devastating heat
that charmed your madness
until, dessicated, your head failed
your lurid heart

iii.

In the little clinic of São Jose
your voice changed forever.
We would never hear you again
As you were, once, in the time
of your magnificence

Though we brought you back
we left you there forever lost,
laid out in madness
on starched unloving sheets

Never to know again
the face staring from the mirror
hung on the blank wall
stark as a pagan icon

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