

1977

# Vivaldi in Early Fall

John Engels

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## Recommended Citation

Engels, John. "Vivaldi in Early Fall." *The Iowa Review* 8.4 (1977): 88-89. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2298>

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driving, drumming on the dash.  
Now that he's gone  
they deal decisively with vegetables.

My pockets clink  
with jeweler's tools, obscene  
secrets I use on my own marriage.

I wish  
you would go home  
where you can't hear them.  
I wish you would go away  
from the very fact of my happiness.

He left you because your teeth are even.  
He left you because a high wind hit Sumatra.  
He left you because your eyes are green.

## Vivaldi in Early Fall / John Engels

O this is what it is to be  
Vivaldi in September, in my  
forty-sixth year, the pines  
just beginning to sing  
on the hillsides, the rivers  
coloring with the first rains  
(which are, as usual, precisely  
on time). And there is also

this young girl, who, each year,  
I bring into my mind,  
making it to be that if she knew  
by what measure I considered her,  
she would turn and look at me and smile,  
thinking, "It is the priest again,  
the one with red hair, who is said  
to make music, and who—as every year—

has gone a little sweetly crazy,  
and I think he may love how I am today  
in my blue dress." And she  
is right. In September I am moved  
to the melancholy theme: I like to make the cello  
sing with the pines, be on the verge  
of the thunderously sad. And, as always,  
at this time, I would like to make the melody

go on forever, but cannot, being cursed  
to disdain of my narrow lusts  
and sorrows. I have never said  
that with me an innocent angel is alone  
at work: it may be I exercise  
the murderous grace. But in September  
the face of God  
passes through my walls to show me  
how the motion of song sleeps  
at the center of the world, as, indeed,  
among the Angels, innocent of time. I hear

at this time every year the voice that loves me  
crying out *return, return!* and I do, I round  
on the beginning in full belief:  
and the girl is gone having never breathed  
as I breathe, in the weary  
exactitude of matter. The song  
stops at the certain moment  
of its growth. It is  
the truth of me, not any lie  
that I imagine, and I  
can do nothing with it. Still,

it is Autumn, and over the whole world  
the air resumes its liveliness, and I,  
Vivaldi, possessed of love and confidence  
in measure wonderful to me, I seek  
to magnify the text: *viola, bassoon, cello*,  
and it is as if the trees have broken into song,  
that the song roots, blossoms, thrusts  
deep toward the still center, and overspreads  
the sky like a million breathing leaves.