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Three Secrets for Alexis

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Three Secrets for Alexis ·
Jane Miller

Eliot's lesson from Dante
that the poet be servant

not master of language
that he attend craft

and stretch
his emotional range

omits how to
begin the awesome

first draft.
Here technique

and emotional veracity
count but

like young wheat
we care less

for an act of mind
than a good

wind and countryside.
Birds pipe supper

and through the note
pleasure somehow

translates.
Good and good in itself,

I have two lovers,
one slower than summer

another like a sea comb,
empty and full.

I hear the old
habits of speech, for ex.,

in this country we say no
for yes

we bite into
a taco at the same time

slugging a beer.
Alexis,

eyes dreams lips and the night goes
was Pound's only line

I heard for years
because in heat its meter

undressed me. In empty space
magnetic fields exist

for no reason. How to use ideas
while living

a line, happy tension!
Turtles, quail,

a downpour
and two hailstorms

in one day are equal
access to knowledge.

Writers who work
in their separate mornings

join the woodchuck
and the missing cat

in the beauty of an act
you spoke about,

placing a candle in a tree.
Light

in a gravitational field
falling turns bluer,

the spruce's new needles
greener

for a poem in the form of an axe.
June, July, August

three secrets
whose time we use

as in sleep
differently to imagine

our sprint and the thrush's
fear when the tree falls,

your idea
about the candle catching fire.