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Accordingly

Tess Gallagher

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Accordingly · Tess Gallagher

It's begun to dawn on you that love
 is a two-headed monkey and
you are its sad accordian. It bites, spits,
 mugs for the cameras, swills
the popcorn of strangers and steals
 from itself. How else
could it serve up passion to a naked, barbaric
 race? You are
stupified enough to trust this
 embarrassment: lucky thing
it only has two hands to pull your stops
 and ram the scales.
All those notes should be played at once—un-hunh—
 like inviting the fire
to the firesale—yes, you want it all
 to go. Love music? There's more
where that came from. "Am I to suffer
 always?" the customer intones into
the tin cup. The echo is a discrete balcony
 where an ocelot in a tiara has,
against all odds, been
 charmed by that last accidental
harmony. Old monkey-business certainly has
 a lucrative pattern of
frustration. The crowd is stacking up like
 cordwood near the parsonage. But she
isn't there, the one you want to intoxicate
 with truthfulness, useful myths
like how the doodlebug got its name—some fool
 on his knees in the garden
calling "doodle! doodle!" until one came out.

Meanwhile the monkeys *is* heading
into another chorus of the Banana Belt Mazurka.
It's enough to make you turn
heartless and predatory. But what's the good
if the "rewarding soup"
is cold? Always the inevitable cry to "play
something uplifting, for Chrissake!"
And anyway who knows when your Beloved
might saunter by
to watch these monsters groom your misery with
commercial
hope. Under duress you indulged her fantasies
about teaching the monkey-heads
to share. Better fall ambassador
to an outrage! Love shareable?
As well to say: "My body belongs to science,"
and switch off the light.