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Presents

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Jan Weissmiller

OUT OF WHICH WINDOW

Out of which window
did I see
the snail on the leaf,
the green green
of the leaf-shaped leaf,
to which the snail-like
snail adhered—
its shell in the wind
more motionless even
than it appeared.
It did not cling
to the fragile leaf
(insubstantial leaf)
beaten by rain,
by wind.
What day was it,
what time?
Out of the kitchen window
with you
(you were there
behind me then),
the snail on its leaf
in the wind.

PRESENTS

Five. There are five.
Picked as a gift and shipped
they've arrived,
three having opened
in their dark wrap

of old news:
three like owls,
or stiffened chrysanthemums;
three in the shape of bells.
Two remain shut.
Snout! Snout! Hand grenades!
What grace in their straight,
close spines.
Large as they are,
they haven't come far enough
to elude analogy.
Soon we'll discover
their exact identity.
Still, they seem exotic,
and no less real
than they are romantic.

II

Two months since they've come,
and the more we think
the less we feel
we can conscientiously
name them.
One's faded.
We've grown fond of its shade.
It's as if
it's a little more ours now.
The two are still shut,
tighter than conchs,
though we aren't convinced
they're without ambition.
Sometimes we're ashamed
to look at them so much—
braving our table
in this landscape which allows them
no escape from the visible.