2015

Serpent

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.7565

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Serpent

I was pent up.
I lived in a penthouse—a rental—
   Bent to its bays with sediment,
       Newsprint, lint, effluents, sentiment.
Fruit flies swarmed the box.
A history of meat repeated itself
In a radio’s cadence in the flowing
Freestanding Oriental tub
I got a good scrubbing in.
Then came an agent, sent
Up by the super to serve
Landlordly papers in a language I glanced
At but no more gathered
Than a tree gathered
   Its debarking.
For I was the elder pentathlete
   Of the premises,
      Spent
Occupant of a pair of parking slots
   For a trio of unrepentant engines,
      Wondering where my long welcome went.
My man has snapped utilities off
   For punishment overdue,
   For guilty I am
Of radiant sentience,
Having lived by the people I was born by
Taken from and lived without
   A demi-century and meant it.
A trove of transient fact
   Will thaw with me
Lamentably in spring
Coming.
I am losing my hold, old broom;
Not knowing where to sweep.