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## Present

Here, in the blue sheen of the present  
vanishing even as it arrives, I want to  
give you something , a present  
although it is worth less than the string  
of pearls I can't afford to buy.  
It is only this arrangement of words,  
with which I hope you will adorn yourself,  
my description of you. Beauty so practiced,  
a rendition of Helen's colors chosen  
to allure. The first time I saw you  
I couldn't help but keep the contours of  
your countenance in my mind, the way a  
live oak keeps its leaves. It cannot exist  
without its canopy. You prefer the sleek  
hardware of a tropical breeze that makes  
each part of you tremble. Let my gift be  
that well designed, to be indispensable  
as the sky. Something you would keep, that may  
not seem important but that will  
in the rondure of the night while you sleep  
remind you that love is here, even if  
it needs from time to time to be repaired.  
That it's ubiquitous as water  
spraying from the nozzle

when you shower that continually runs  
down the drain only to be replenished.

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## Palm Haven

Wind breathes behind the curtains as shadows  
distill in noon's fermented light.

Look, as the air warms, how insects swarm  
out of the grass, brilliant specks  
that swim about our faces in a gritty cloud  
whose undulations makes us bat our eyes  
as leaves fall, melting away  
into a frail debris that encrusts the yards.  
Here we are exiles among angels,  
in this district of exquisite surfaces  
where crowns of Mexican fan palms float  
above the street on their slender poles.

What sort of God would consume us,  
soft-bellied and salt-stained, who stand  
in the knots of shade eyes pointed at our shoes?  
Or who stroll sandstone paths, past  
earth-colored columns hung with lanterns,  
each dangling over an urn planted with ferns and flowers.  
A murmur of bees in the honeysuckle,  
a fountain making its sleepy music.  
The heat clots in the folds of our sleeves  
as a jet passes over, the drone  
shaking the hinges of the trees  
seems to fill every pore with reverberations

that scrape us to the very bone  
before it subsides.  
In these spacious hours  
the product of our labors is stillness.  
The sprinklers click on with a sound  
resembling someone rapidly snapping his fingers.  
The imprint of my steps  
evaporates on the pavement  
while I sit out on the patio staring  
into the vacancies of afternoon,

sun marking my skin with  
indecipherable initials and signs.

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