

Before the Divorce, Bed Bugs

Author(s): JOSEPH LANDI

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JOSEPH LANDI

## Before the Divorce, Bed Bugs

We were bitten  
 along the repulsive blue tracks  
 of ankles and wrists, on the backs  
 of our heels, on toes and fingertips,  
 pierced to the farthest reaches  
 of our unstable hearts.

Darkness hid  
 the source of our disgust.  
 We sighed like trains between  
 stations, drawing them to us.  
 Skin spoke in codes of the elements,  
 a language for the lonely and ravenous.

Now poison's the cure,  
 and home a nest of carcasses.  
 At the curb, mattresses  
 show tufted guts to joggers and stray cats.  
 A driver prowls cul-de-sacs,  
 scanning the piles  
 for remnants of strangers' desires.

In a dim rented room,  
 he assembles the plunder—  
 empty ribcage of slats,  
 padded headboard of leather.  
 He tapes shut the slash  
 that we carved as a warning,  
 resting his face on a secret hunger.

TOM DALEY

## Love Song for John on Route 140, Coming Home from Peterborough

Wrinkling home on Route 140,  
 I think of the frank loveliness  
 of the day, the air clean

& clear, the sky scraped  
 down to its blue lubricities,  
 each cloud seldom & singular,

adrift as a paroled convict.  
 I take your hand in mine  
 with the wistfulness

of an old fever, & think  
 how fortunate I am  
 to be kept so coolly

& lovingly in the bounds  
 of your heart. Love songs  
 have taken precedence

over prayers in the great  
 welter of the popular  
 imagination

so I offer you this one  
 without melody or refrain,  
 one that steers straight

& even as it sustains.