

Forget Reading

Also by Anthony Hawley:

Vocative (Phylum Press chapbook)

Afield (Ugly Duckling Presse chapbook)

The Concerto Form (Shearsman Books)

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Forget Reading

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Acknowledgments may be found on page 99.

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P(r)etty Sonnets

a love letter won't get you anywhere
because it talks from the wrong part of the body
the love letter has no idea
i never heard one
sticky as it should be
a violin says
the name 'clara'
you are frightened and moved
to rest your heads
but this poem makes no efforts
to love you
and the cold air outside
is not a letter
does not care to hold you

as if this were not about to break
as if from the cracked pitcher
birds did not fly out
as if across the window they seldom cast their shadow
as if not the goose
than who
would last this
winter in which there is too much
already
as if this winter would have us walk across
as if not once cast a single
shadow as if a shadow were not
allowed as if the new snow wouldn't have it
sound of a pitcher about to break
sound of a headache

or poem is a beach that erodes
over time but don't compare it to any postcard
swift undertow eats up parts of poem
though no additional scenery at the outset
gives it a fighting chance
breakers surfboards suntans elsewhere churches
postcard has the upper hand
immaculate coney island thing
confectionary tuscan spire under runny tuscan sun thing
are always just that
poem can't parade and no one holds it
up to the light or usually for too long
look at the postcard and say
this reminds me of the time i of the summer i
but not to poem for souvenirs

found a piano
colored blue
some yellow
sounded same
as plastic as
a hurt circus
with it wrote
six whole operas
key of g
key of junkyard
dear videogames
i lost you
on level six
all piano plays
that losing tune

lunch upon us
would you let me
eat you up
salt and pepper
every part
says they toyota
says i
tomato, what bright cardinal
i'd take its picture
eat it up
my camera's still
inside the day
long enough
not to remember

i could only sit a minute more
we went north while reading
impatiently
someone else's sentence
dear dante
forgive me
the volcanic rocks, the lava
the whole descent
you are not here but
i stole them from you
anyway dear guido
i wish you and i and martin and rebecca could go sailing
but do you have a boat
i stole this idea of sailing

but not in california
with hell's four rivers
no necessary boatman
ferries anybody anywhere
a gull shits on the page
poetry is not the ocean
but watch the ocean draw lines
tougher than anything poetry
the four rivers of hell
also convincing
though water doesn't
easily remember
you with or without
a boatman or california
straight to hell