**‘Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind’**

Surprised by joy—impatient as the Wind

I wished to share the transport—Oh! with whom

But Thee, long buried in the silent Tomb,

That spot which no vicissitude can find?

Love, faithful love recalled thee to my mind—

But how could I forget thee!—Through what power,

Even for the least division of an hour,

Have I been so beguiled as to be blind

To my most grievous loss?—That thought’s return

Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,

Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,

Knowing my heart’s best treasure was no more;

That neither present time, nor years unborn

Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

—William Wordsworth

**Sudden Light**

I have been here before,

But when or how I cannot tell:

I know the grass beyond the door,

The sweet keen smell,

The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before,—

How long ago I may not know:

But just when at that swallow’s soar

Your neck turn’d so,

Some veil did fall,—I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before?

And shall not thus time’s eddying flight

Still with our lives our love restore

In death’s despite,

And day and night yield one delight once more?

—Dante Gabriel Rossetti

**‘What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why’**

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,

I have forgotten, and what arms have lain

Under my head till morning; but the rain

Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh

Upon the glass and listen for reply,

And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain

For unremembered lads that not again

Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.

Thus in winter stands the lonely tree,

Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,

Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:

I cannot say what loves have come and gone,

I only know that summer sang in me

A little while, that in me sings no more.

—Edna St. Vincent Millay

**February**

A chimney, breathing a little smoke.  
The sun, I can’t see  
making a bit of pink  
I can’t quite see in the blue.  
The pink of five tulips  
at five p.m. on the day before March first.  
The green of the tulip stems and leaves  
like something I can’t remember,  
finding a jack-in-the-pulpit  
a long time ago and far away.  
Why it was December then  
and the sun was on the sea  
by the temples we’d gone to see.  
One green wave moved in the violet sea  
like the UN Building on big evenings,  
green and wet  
while the sky turns violet.  
A few almond trees  
had a few flowers, like a few snowflakes  
out of the blue looking pink in the light.  
A gray hush  
in which the boxy trucks roll up Second Avenue  
into the sky. They’re just  
going over the hill.  
The green leaves of the tulips on my desk  
like grass light on flesh,  
and a green-copper steeple  
and streaks of cloud beginning to glow.  
I can’t get over  
how it all works in together  
like a woman who just came to her window  
and stands there filling it  
jogging her baby in her arms.  
She’s so far off. Is it the light  
that makes the baby pink?  
I can see the little fists  
and the rocking-horse motion of her breasts.  
It’s getting grayer and gold and chilly.  
Two dog-size lions face each other  
at the corners of a roof.  
It’s the yellow dust inside the tulips.  
It’s the shape of a tulip.  
It’s the water in the drinking glass the tulips are in.  
It’s a day like any other.

—James Schuyler

**Dead Center**

Upon reflection, as I dip my pen

Tonight, forth ripple messages in code.

In Now’s black waters burn the stars of Then.

Seen from the embankment, marble men

Sleep upside down, bat-wise, the sleep bestowed

Upon reflection. As I dip my pen

Thinking how others, deeper into Zen,

Blew on immediacy until it glowed,

In Now’s black waters burn the stars of Then.

Or else I’m back at Grandmother’s. I’m ten,

Dust hides my parents’ roadster from the road

Which dips—*into* reflection, with my pen.

Breath after breath, harsh O’s of oxygen—

Never deciphered, what do they forbode?

In Now’s black waters burn the stars. Ah then

Leap, Memory, supreme equestrienne,

Through hoops of fire, circuits you overload!

Beyond reflection, as I dip my pen

In Now’s black waters, burn the stars of Then.

—James Merrill

**Mnemonic**

I forgot the prairie because it stood

so still. I forgot the clouds because

they were always moving. I forgot

the taste of water because it lay quietly

inside the taste of everything.

I forgot a childhood when it disappeared

through a hole in itself. Later, mushrooms

emerged from the damp soil.

The way to keep something is to forget it.

Then it goes to an enormous place.

Grass grows to the horizon like hair.

In the sky a cloud goes on naming

and unnaming itself.

—Jenny George