

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.