

On alien shores

1

The garden is whooping it up
overwhelmed by plenitude, thrips

and mirids flutter their eyelashes
and loll about on perfumed squashes

carefully grooming their little legs
while jagged ambush bugs

lay aside, for once, their mantle
of discretions and scandalise

the rest of the community
parading, with impunity

their slightly clubbed antennae
their flaring sides, their brawny

forward tibiae. These mechanics
of annihilation, organic

BP91

and rude, normally comport
themselves with circumspection, for

even on this relatively
primitive and atavistic level

death is an extremely painful
circumstance and therefore most distasteful

to the exoskeletal nation
But this, this is a day for celebration

2

Imagine an espalier
tricked out with dripping pears,

a crown of nails, tiny
webs drenched in aromatic wine.

It stands here, bristling
in all its finery, with fists

full of shredded letters
from the underground, tattered
sentiments, jagged little notes
from the recently dead, composed

in the dark. How redolent
this world is with its garden-

variety losses, its humble
garments, its thimbles-

full of grief. If only the earth
were more selective with

her appetites. But no. Her hosts
transmit these thin leaves and

scatter diminishing messages:

I miss your sweet arms I miss

his hands my fingers are cold

oh love it's so cold—

3

The grand seigneur is falling

His complexion is pale

and empty as the sky

Tiny, unfinished billets-doux

lie scattered at his feet

He cannot get it right

His fingers tremble so

in the compositions. More

paper. He needs more paper. He

cannot remember the name, the

address, the feel of the skin

It was like paper, he thinks

shiny and dry. Across the table

the desiccated, nearly weightless

carcass of a moth is drawn

mysteriously off by some

invisible agent. White

She was white all over. It

pleasures him to remember this

White like the stars. Like celestial

navigation. Ah Arcturus. Aldebaran

Let it fall. Pass me on