

Justin Quinn

EARLY HOUSE



Gallery Books

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for Tomáš Fürstzeller

A Glove

I lost a glove
and kept the other,
my life on hold
through snow and storm,
one hand cold,
the other warm.

I lost a glove
and while the other
hung on to me
for all I'm worth,
the first roamed free
over the earth.

I lost a glove
and found another,
another sheath,
a shade of leather
that seemed to breathe
a different weather.

I lost a glove
and it found other
flesh to clad,
crimes to commit,
although I had
no hand in it.

I lost a glove
and, sad, the other
at the breach
would try to clap

but couldn't reach
across that gap.

I lost a glove,
then lost the other.
I'd no more forms
that could withhold
the snows, the storms,
the perishing cold.

Conversation Galante

She says the dead come back for a mere flake, fleck
or fume of favourite food. A fragrant air
we hardly know is more than they can bear.
For them the speed of our bored talk is breakneck.

She says when we lean in to catch the scent
that rain showers summon from the April earth
dead millions groove themselves into the berth
of our one sense. They are engulfed, content.

He says let them do what they want, these dumb
sad hordes of shades. Do you think that they'll come
the moment I push back the floral hem

of the summer dress you look so lovely in,
and lift it off, leaving you just a grin?
What do you reckon that will do to them?

Astray

I check her photograph in those few months or weeks
when she was turning from a girl into a woman,
wading from the Adriatic, the wavelets' peaks
around her legs, and lovely lips that I have come in.

Which isn't praise she'd like, so let me also say
her face has hardly changed, the lines so light, a curl
just as it was. And once again I've gone astray
in trying to tell apart the woman from the girl.

Brinkmanship

We like our little fight
so much we make it stay
at least another night
and breakfast here next day,

wondering all the while
what harm is done if any
by going the extra mile,
or if it's one too many.