

Musical Notation

There was nothing of note left to say,
except maybe
the slow vibrato of a cello
drawn out painfully on the bow,
a single string of melancholy.

I would end it here,
many notes from where we began,
not delicately
but in a saw-saw of violins,
a rush of timpani,
those small flats and sharps
that when clashed together
have a way of grating the skin.

Some composers
place the odd, the unthinkable,
the discordant side-by-side.
They scrape kisses on our ears,
jolt our senses, run backwards
along the spines of our hair,
and we delight in that sweet sourness,
grinning on a bed of disharmony.

But after the first crescendo,
I found my position,
third back from the middle row,
playing the off-beats,
oom-pa, oom-pa, oom-pa,
keeping things going steady
because an orchestra is not made of leads
but the sum of its parts,
greater or lesser.

With you, the score was always
more ambitious than practice.
You didn't notice the baton fall from your hand,
or the notes slip quietly off the stave.
Now the sheets are blank.
In no particular arrangement
I gather the small black notes to my chest.

I would begin here,
Waiting for the tap, tap of percussion,
like morning dew on a symphony of green.
Yet it's the silence that makes me afraid,
the change of tempo,
the pause in-between.