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Villa, Toys

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Villa

Canzones, lutes and viol music
put him, like the view, into a minor key.

From the elevated gallery, his guests confide which girls
they find most beautiful, and the sun droops like a ripening grape.

His garden, unveiling a labyrinth anyone can master.
The first citizen's hands behind his back while his philosopher
advises him

of the hierarchy of the worlds –
crystal ornaments swaying gently from translucent strings,

and Lorenzo carves a diagram in the earth,
of Volterra, the peaks to the north and west

of his holdings, an equation of interest on the debt
of the Monte. *To me and also from me –*

he smiles – *when my father suffered, he had the monastery –
no sins of his eyes, mouth, loins, and hands, only pride*

*and that he kept hidden. But the monks
are still incommunicado, so I come here.*

He picks a lock of jasmine to store behind his ear;
I am sufficient for many trades – poet, student diplomat, lover,

*but in none of them truly fine. Did you see the designs
for these ponds ascending the hill, one following another*

*like tears flooding back to an eye:
Against nature – there is your defense*

*of human dignity. The resonance of friendship,
perfect tones of music, each corresponding,*

each signifying the patron, who
drapes his cloister from one shoulder like a cloak.

A discipline: treaties, construction on the Palazzo, the *condottiere*
all ticking on without them;

aureole of a stone released in a black pool: *Signore,*
sometimes everyone needs to retreat
from the city.

Toys

for Teresa

The magnifying glass poised over fireflies.
GI Joe's arms so rubbery you could pretend
he was being broken like a saint in the inquisition.
Your mother discovering the bees
in the microwave oven, *I don't know*
if you were being cruel or just idiots, so you
never told her where you let them sting you,
ran out naked in the avaricious sun,
and twenty years later, sitting in this classroom
hearing that we destroy everything that we desire
and that desire is all there is of us, you remember,

the same way, ten years afterwards,
 you'll find the answer in your diary,
 caught in the gyre of having forgotten it;
 a twenty dollar bill moldered
 in the back of your girlfriend's old jeans.
 The time you caught the fish and finned
 your hand when you pinched his lip
 from your nightstick, smashed a mud bass
 with a cinderblock because he was too small
 for you to consume him. The regret you feel now
 mouthing scrod in restaurants and angus in St. Louis;
 channels of blood washing themselves away
 when this sticks like napalm. And all the hurt
 you failed to cause, the snake of his belt
 hung on a tree, a woman leaving,
 slapping you, two AM, not sure if it *is* you
 or a scene in a movie, shouting that you should grow up
 Because that is the thing they are always shouting:
 red heads, brunettes, Farrah Fawcett Majors,
 always angry, disgusted, bombed out,
 leaning in the doorframe one last time before they leave you
 or while they're throwing their underwear into valises,
 insisting on telling you just what they think –
The idea that you have a self
 And what you can do with it.