

[23]

Camphor and Walnut

È come in certi giorni che l'aria è troppo chiara, troppo limpida, si vedono i contorni spiccati, netti, precisi, e vuol dire che vien la pioggia.

- Natalia Ginzburg, *Le voci della sera*

on the fore-edge
a drift of inelegant rain might
gloss the green in trout-bright, rot
the blossom brown, drown its fretted sky
in fretless hush. The bank is bladeless,
unstriated, imprecisely green. Elsewhere,
at field's edge, heaped chalk
forgets itself, dim prints give up their ghost.
Summer at its turn might be legible, if,
say, the box was blight-hit, the cherry
cankered. Instead I know nothing exactly,
exactly nothing. I think I want to know
the span of things.

If
we could know that –
if we could know (the story goes)
the deepest ripple of each light-cracked star-fogged
tentacular thing – the reach, the tending limit,
each plush and bloom of its blood –
fulcrum and point and
crux –

but we can't, of course, beyond
that pittance of ourselves, hip to rib,
sternum to clavicle. I could know you,
or try, meadowlit, bramble coronate,
could trace uncowed the hollow of your cheek
and feel that I had grazed reality. But
radiance, radiance, radiance
is imprecise: the massed self-blunting hedgerow,
your black and thornless sky.
Hold. Incurve. Unpunctuate
yourself. Burn out. Blur bright.
Sink to rest with the berry gore
in the chamber of your light.