

# So Long

*I spring from the pages into your arms—  
decease calls me forth.*

—Walt Whitman, "So Long!"

since you have come to me in the night  
heated and empty, or in the afternoon  
with need in your mouth for passion or  
comfort,

a lifetime since you have wanted  
the small flakes of my life that I could  
spare  
few enough though willingly.

You sense that I have withered or died  
or ceased to be whatever it was  
you wished me to be,

eroded, irradiated  
cut sharply away with cold steel,  
reduced anyway until

pulling myself up with great effort  
from my dream of you in the late night  
or in the afternoon, of wearing on you

a fashion no longer fit  
removed for the last time  
gently but finally obscene.

Do I alone remember our song  
when you squeezed my thumb tightly  
as we climbed hopeful

into the high stands of the glaring  
afternoon  
or met sweetly and often Sundays  
on your breaking bed?

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