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Donna Pucciani

Finished. Everything has gone well.
The piano has rippled like raw silk under my fingers,
catching the overhead lights in its ivory weft.
The hand of the violinist is hot when I take it
and we bow together.

* * * * *
The coolness of the keyboard, Beethoven’s
low-to-middle ground, carpets the quiet hall.
I strike an “A” for the fiddle’s center of gravity,
and begin, setting a pace that swans could swim to.

My right hand octaves are sure, dark in their legato,
my wrist rounding the phrase, pulling the keys together
in a loose knot that ties itself up right where it began,
my left hand groaning its low-down love,
struggling for propriety.

The violin enters, his back to me, all shoulders and elbows
wielding the bow. Muscles hunched in a black coat,
he empties out the memory of F major, his left wrist
grabbing the sound from nowhere and leaning into its vibrato.
Curved fingers climb the bridge, spider-like, webbing chromatics,
spinning pure Platonic song.

I drop back, giving him room for the low notes
that sing less sharply in space, not tossed over his shoulder
but placed carefully like marbles on the sloping lid of the grand
to roll off right into the palms of my waiting hands.
So goes the Romance, every note perfect
in its classical restraint, clean-cut, the pitch a gift
of perfect harmonics layering like a pearl in an oyster.

Until the recap. Suddenly he is sweating
under his starched collar, his bow tie and bib
crushed hot in the spotlight, the body of the violin
gleaming under his chin. Vibrato becomes
gypsy trill. One note seduces the next until,
lying on the forest floor somewhere on the outskirts
of Vienna, he is possessed by the soul of the master.
I follow. Demonic fire meets deaf heaven’s wings.
Inferno melts Paradiso until ivory and wood
have merged in the dark, coupled on the shore,
and, hand in hand, walk into the roaring sea.