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MAY IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK, AS A METAPHOR FOR LIFE

In an instant
The magnolia tree faded.
Green is lovely,
She thought.
But why didn't I take a picture
Of purple and purple and purple
And pink?

Last week,
The whole city smelled like lilacs.
Now new-mown grass
Scents the air.
Oddly comforting that things move and change,
She said aloud.
But I should have bought that
Lilac perfume.

Graduation.
Funny word.
Like elevation and gradation
And move-on-beginning
Not like "end."
The house is quiet
And I am alone,
She screamed.
See my photos?

MT. HOPE CEMETERY

Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass
Lie beneath ground you can see from your
Hospital bed.
What are they trying to tell you?
That even in death they are less racist than you
are in life?

Poems

That doctors are human but hope springs eternal?
That God casts his ballot in gender- and color-
blind ways?

Maybe it doesn't mean anything,
Their lying there silent and stiff
In full view of your room.
You think too much,
Stare at the ceiling through eyes not engaged.
Near-death evokes genius
In those who are shallow
In health.

Drink to their memories.
Don't need a surgeon
To open your mind.

MANAGED CARE

We are once again children,
Each led by the hand by a grownup we
Trust
Or are scared to refuse.
We cannot or dare not cry out,
We being by nature of Patriot's blood,
And knowing that treason tribunals we could not
withstand.

Each tries still to render,
In a way that permits him to look in the mirror by
day
And sleep in the evening,
A service.
To answer a calling, a mission, a dream
That we all are too foolish or stubborn to bury.
(We all may be buried alive, right alongside our
ethos —
Damned useless, damned silent, damned mute.)

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Poems

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