

**Andrew Frisardi**

**Early Riser**

The dark is petaled, fleshy like a lily,  
And dew is magnifying a dot of day,

When fingers pivot on an icy grip  
To swing a door out from a rockface room,

As motes of thought too inchoate to say  
Drift slantwise slowly on a draft of dreams,

While moulting light wheels back from far away  
To flutter down like feathers at the arms,

And the creaking man-frame settles in its nook  
To find a chair and board and an open book.

**In a Renaissance Bishop's Garden**

With swelling cupolas and cornucopias,  
The hillside garden is a theme park for us  
Still: an architectural thesaurus  
Of body's dream of on-the-spot utopias.

Its fountains are a learned priest's creations,  
As link by link they gurgle liquid chains  
That coil into pools to sluice through veins  
Of statues wet with spouts' ejaculations.

The sound of water: how describe it? Purl  
And tinkle, lave and lap, lip-sync a song  
Of shade in summer, when the light is long  
And oyster-mind secretes a body-pearl.

The naiads in the water speak in tongues,  
Baffling to anti-Babel gospel fire.  
Their hefty haunches strain to push them higher  
While tritons shimmy down the angel-rungs.

A stone boy laughs in splashes from a grotto  
As if he's overheard a sober motto.

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## The Distance

*Castiglione in Teverina, Spring 2020*

Covid left us cold in the wake of winter.  
Then the numbers, northward, vertiginally  
Mounted. Storefronts shut. And the hours unrippled,  
Pooled in our closing.

Teverina's trees were a pause in music,  
Empty staves of branches that dripped piano  
Interludes of silence. The Tiber Valley  
Harmonized distance.

Painted rainbow *Ce la faremo* banners  
Grinned in windows children had decorated.  
Neighbors sang together in twilight choirs  
Balconies lofted.

Held to household angles, we walked in circles.  
Army trucks up north on the television  
Solemnly disgorged the remains in churches  
Morgues were disguised as.

Casalpusterlengo, Codogno, Lodi,  
Lombardia, Bergamo, Terranova,  
Castiglione d'Adda, Milano, Brescia:  
Names that were falling.

August at the church of the Snowy Mary  
We will feign a flurry amid the swelter,  
Soapsuds blown out from a machine above us,  
Laundering *afa*.

Sailing clouds will dock in the blue of morning:  
Back at last in Italy, bliss of exiles,  
Shelley said, so many are right at home in  
Breaching the distance.

### NOTE:

*Ce la faremo* = "We'll get through this," "We can do it," etc.  
*afa* = hot, muggy air