

JAYDN DEWALD

Nocturne (or, Landscape with Father)

We can no longer stand in the clearing, in the naked woods,
Letting the Oregon mist seep through our clothes—
Our father, under his green afghan, is summoning Hubbard,
Blue Spirits, as though to make us face ourselves
(Swollen-eyed, ill-shaven) in the plastic slips of his records.
Ashbery said, “We live in the sigh of our present”—
But we can no longer even believe in time: we are kneeling
In our bedroom, thumbing through album covers;
At the same moment, we are slogging through delphiniums
To see our father, silhouetted, practicing Hsing I,
On a wooden bridge. Ah, here it is, *Blue Spirits*. Our father
Lifting one liver-spotted hand as the needle falls
Into the groove, as the wide leaves flush too soon, too soon.
Can we turn back later, after he has died, to live
With silence and black coffee, to amble over the stone path
In our sockfeet, our threadbare robe, considering
Our next unpredictable gesture, like hacking up firewood
On a floor of mirrors? The question is ridiculous—
We can no longer leave this house, this music; we will live
Beside him, on this folding chair, reading Auden.
Even in Poros, years later, grating lemon over grilled squid,
We will prop him up to watch reruns of *Bonanza*.
Meanwhile, we are listening to Hubbard, whose music fills
This house and this house alone, though we hear,
Under a sun-reddened parasol, for example, faint overtones
That make us close our eyes. Our father is dying—
Nothing stopping it. Yet here he is, for the moment, patting
The green afghan, his once-heroic legs, standing
Moreover in an abandoned farmhouse: the sound of a horn
Lost among the rooms, the nothingness of rooms,
And we can no longer find it for him, our father: he is gone.