

AFTERNOON SONG

by Stephen Burt

Take a blade of grass between your teeth.
Check the sun it's all alone in blue with nothing underneath.

Take a walk to the bus stop wait a while.
See the driver coming up on a thousand miles.

Fifty-fifty that it's going to be going your way.
Two-to-one the evening comes at you with nothing to say.

Take one take two and then take ten.
We made construction paper chains.
Take five take six from eleven and then,
Dream houses fall to cards again.

The perfect day's the one we leave behind.
So much to do ahead but I don't mind.

Crisp pollen interference patterns like a crowded pool.
See nature starting up or shutting down its summer school.

Kids on skateboards take the residential corners so fast.
They watch each other like a comet from the distant past.

I was to be the boy congratulated just for growing tall.
When I should have been the girl who walks through walls.

Take three take four you'll be compelled to tell the world who you adore.
Take eight and nine you're seventeen.
The world looks back at you for seconds from behind a one-way screen.

The perfect day's the one we leave behind.
So much to do ahead but I don't mind.

Three-season porches with a car door open on contentment why.
In your future you'll remember we were happy on the same weekday that
made you start to cry.

Take one take two and then take ten.
Ear to the ground for distant trains.
Take five take six from eleven and then
Our houses shake the ground again.

The perfect day's the one we leave behind.
So much to do tomorrow I don't mind.

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