

## A Correspondence

Friend, the summer you saw The Arch of Triumph,  
a post card I dreamt about, both of our lives, as usual,  
were starting over.  
of course we didn't know it.  
Nights I took walks or sat alone on the decrepit front porch.  
I was waiting for the cat to come home after mooching all day  
on somebody's leftovers, couch space, air conditioning.  
By then I had him for almost two years, a large Holstein-spotted  
Tabby your Ex unloaded one Christmas. That same morning,  
about 3 a.m., the toilet backed up, flooded my neighbor below.  
Between ringing bucket after bucket, collecting newspapers of wet soot,  
he drilled a hole in his light to let excess water pour:  
Brown, brown, a puddle spouting...  
Listening, expecting skin to sizzle, hair to fry, I fell  
into infatuation & decided to move, the proximity too incidental,  
a temptation whenever loneliness thumped.

Of course I stayed put while, by then, you were touring  
England, newly wedded, visiting the in-laws.  
Next came Greece, Athens' ruins & finally, after  
an airport bomb threat, mysterious Istanbul with  
the trailing after men, & the women, all tall,  
anonymous black babushkas.  
"It's scary, but wonderful," you wrote.

I kept the letter on my bed stand beside a balloon globe  
filled with the breath of some close beloved. On the wall, above both,  
small pasted on glow-in-the-dark stars shone, all personal constellations  
I communed to while sleeping. In fact, they are still there, though a few  
have fallen or lost their magical green tint.

This evening on the porch, the sap of two magnificent Blue Spruces  
rotting its roof, I visited with my downstairs neighbor, the crush,  
(lie, lie) long since gone. He talked of 'World's End', the book,  
& worried aloud about the great ozone meltdown. I said to envision  
tissues converging over a re-opened wound, listened to locusts  
stirring in star-dotted branches, & saw my cat in the beams of an  
oncoming car. For a minute breath stopped, then, whoosh, softness  
scampering, & his tail curling about my ankles...

Now you're in Rome, over seas some war bombed.  
Scary but wonderful. Friend, you were right.