

## Afternoons in and out of Paradise

the loose-throated peals  
of children playing, float across  
fences, and into everyone's afternoon.

I remember one like this

shouts, climbing walls  
crawling through keyholes  
leaping into sick rooms

where he lay, dragging  
his boated chest  
over the barnacled air

spat into jars  
raged as best he could  
his wintering world

his wife calling out

turn down the volume  
of our play, our high time  
to scream

the afternoon scuttling itself

images of white sheets  
disgusting jars  
life at the other end, looming

incomprehensible

yet enough to haunt the ignorance  
of our greenest days  
uncomfortable with our plucked

fruit, yet comfortable with the distance

such a distance, a forever –  
breathe in and out  
and it's gone –

that afternoon like this afternoon

with the high spirits of children  
thrilling the autumn  
trees

I think of him, long gone

and ungrasped  
by the scattering pirates, boarding  
their backyard ships.

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