

Anne Compton

Suite for Lucy Maud Montgomery

Meeting

I will call you Lucy
though you commanded Maud
from all else
and what you hid there
I will know
 the woods I walk in
is swampy (though it is
the same Island) birds come
down to me
there are colours of green
and grey and the smell of settled
waters

and I had there one summer a duck
who came into my lap
dripping of mud and slime green

 for us, Lucy,
it is the same place
though different

Island

In the heat of that summer
there was a crazy growth.
Decent trees obscured farm houses.
And the naked children were
a mere slither in the tall grass.
Gradually, the dirt road
disappeared
into the fronds of the wild sorrel.

A walker there
parts a tangle of tendril fingers,
the purple vetch pea searching
like an eager lover
in everything.

Day after day
the haze and the soft wind
and the scent of the muskmallow
heavy
on the dreaming voluptuary.

The Cat

the cat makes
a unity with you, Lucy,
who loved cats
you had to have something
didn't you

this grey cat lapping a drink
from the dirty puddle
on the asphalt roof is
a wanderer a
rummager in garbage

your cats were well-bred, like you,
"indifferent to love" you said
oh had you been that too
what you might have left for me
but you gave whatever they asked in books
and manners

and you were not real

the cat regards its necessary leap
from roof's edge
much depends on my
reaching you

her husband

when I was young I said
an innate discontent
is useful
like scouring pads
to modify the environment
Ewen was always very clean
or so I thought

 Ewen
whose name I could not write
nor speak nor spell for
years

First Letters to Mr. MacMillan

It is said I am a pretty thing
 though you would think from my books
 I was tall and dark.

It is said I am vivacious
 love life, though truth to say
 it is colour I love as you
 love music, not
 smell, God
 how I hated the smell of that man
 (Ewen, whom I have accepted is suitable in every respect.)

And I was, ornce,
 in bed for a whole week
 from excitement.

The care of daffodils
 is a matter of discretion as is
 when to lie, when to be truthful.

My Dear Mr. MacMillan, It is said
 I am really rather pretty
 that I am vivacious and love life.
 It is said that I love nature, that
 I can commune with it
 and I like best the small flowers
 I grow with my own hands. You
 would think from my books
 that I am tall and dark
 My Dear Mr. MacMillan, I
 wish.

last days: L.M.

these are the dark days
I knew they would come
for I have owed you them.

2

come into
the ferny woods
my love
my mouth has memory of you.

3

Fredericka, there was laughter.