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, once,
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.