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Jazz Rudiments

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Daulton Selke

Jazz Rudiments

I tell everyone I'm a jazz drummer,
but really I just take too long on the first note because I fell
in love and dribbled red wine over my heart,
thinking of tripping towards the neighbor girl
with a piece of my mother's angel
food-cake, and how my father never understood,
but sat out early in thunderstorms waiting,
mouthing old hunt songs in silence
and watching his smoke unfurl in smudged pirouettes
that swing and saunter along the lightning
as he coughs up a couple bebop licks
until the cornet-yellow sun spreads the clouds,
and once when his golden retriever ran off
to bring back a wilted canary,
my dad came home hungry
and buried it by the sunflowers,
singing softly with his hands in the dirt.