A Cry of Presence

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A CRY OF PRESENCE (For Mark Fishbein)

"A cry of Absence, Absence, in the heart,
And in the woods the furious winter blowing."

"Winter Remembered" by John Crowe Ransom

In the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia
the city poet
a weekend camper by choice
confronts trees
in unexpected numbers
unanticipated varities
and returns
green-elated, high
to have his car stolen.

Here in the city
where spring is not
whatever it is supposed to be
we question
any impassioned cry of absence
when no lover has vanished
and there is only
the trembling presence of automotive ghost
honking at treachery.

Why invoke
another time, place
a landscape green and alien to asphalt?
We must cry presence
the present city spring
sharp in new betrayal
being largely a calendar spring
and summer will be upon us
harsh, ruthless, abrasive
before we know it.
No memory, no emotion
will serve to conjure up
a furious winter blowing
through dead romances.
No dancing spring breeze
will set new love in motion.

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