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To Dorothy, Again

Marvin Bell

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TO DOROTHY, AGAIN

Marvin Bell

It is not terrible to be old, said the geezer.
Back when I lived like a spider in the toe
of a shoe, fearing the step of a god,
taking a sentimental journey day after day,
afraid of the nails, fearful of a pinecone,
I was still empty of death, I weighed nothing.

And the years of radical action, such clarity!,
arched between life and death, while I stood
apart in the middle. I was already enamored
of the inscrutable, oh yes!—I thought the rain
too heavy for the high pitch of charity. I
thought madness a distillate, god-given.

I love you like the salt in salt water, the sugar
in the fruit. I love you like the glaze layering
a clay urn buried long at sea—our vessel.
A kiln at cone 9 liquefies everything in it.
Its heat holds the clay in strict suspension.
It is easier to be old when you're in love.