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Other Equations for Velocity

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OTHER EQUATIONS FOR VELOCITY

Wagenaar: Other Equations for Velocity

**MARK
WAGENAAR**

Distance over time, or beneath it,
the exact equation—strange that the bullet
exploding through the apple (a paradiso of one),
the handful of monkey shit flung through the bars
at the gawking visitor, the kingfisher that falls
through flame & snow at sunset,
are subject to the same ribbon of numbers—
beyond him, yet inadequate for the speed
at which one life turns from another.
For the world to turn from the sadness of Tuesday,
for the pace of the moth steering by starlight—
like her forgiveness, the means beyond him, the end
a distance he can only look to. The shrapnel that once
whistled at the speed of sound now traveling
a half inch a year through his abdomen, leaving
a score behind it, a red symphony of sixteenth notes,
an inscription only the blood reads. Each time
the metal splinter sets off an alarm at an airport
he guesses at the distance it will travel
on the flight, the thousandth of an inch between
New York & Tokyo, the infinitesimal movement
in the time it takes to turn a glass doorknob
(like trying to feel the spin of the Earth),
in the time it takes for the thought—maybe
they melted down a slipper to make this—to swim
its way to his hand from a synapse near

where the night meets the sea, if cradling it
he cannot help but think of the ball

of her foot—a paradiso wherever we are,
she once said—and the surgeries, her ruined arches
like white gates that open into a courtyard
where a salt statue dreams of dancing.

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