I spring from the pages into your arms—
decease calls me forth.
—Walt Whitman, “So Long!”

since you have come to me in the night
heated and empty, or in the afternoon
with need in your mouth for passion or
comfort,
a lifetime since you have wanted
the small flakes of my life that I could
spare
few enough though willingly.

You sense that I have withered or died
or ceased to be whatever it was
you wished me to be,
eroded, irradiated
cut sharply away with cold steel,
reduced anyway until
pulling myself up with great effort
from my dream of you in the late night
or in the afternoon, of wearing on you

a fashion no longer fit
removed for the last time
gently but finally obscene.

Do I alone remember our song
when you squeezed my thumb tightly
as we climbed hopeful
into the high stands of the glaring
afternoon
or met sweetly and often Sundays
on your breaking bed?

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