Unattainable: A Cento

Gabrielle Grilli

My spirit is too weak–mortality
scornful and strange, and sorrowful, and full.
All is black shadow, but the lucid line
but it must never, never come in sight.
The milky way, the bird of paradise;
lackyng my love I go from place to place
speechless, inept, and totally unmanned.
Yes, it is miraculous to think of you;
this is just habit, blood, and memory.
I miss you, I love you too much, you want
a cold, sweet, silver life, wrapped in round waves.
But we are articled to error; we
were nearly empty, as will often be true;
sex and history. And skin and bone.

NOTE

Line one is from "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles" by John Keats. Line two is from "Written in Emmerson's Essays" by Matthew Arnold. Line three is from "Huge vapours brood above the clifted shore" by Charlotte Smith. Line four is from "Renouncement" by Alice Meynell. Line five is from "Prayer (I)" by George Herbert. Line six is from *Amoretti* 78 by Edmund Spencer,. Line seven is from "Double Sonnet" by Anthony Hecht. Line eight is from "The Very End" by Tom Sleigh. Line nine is from "Coda" by David Huddle. Line ten is from "Words" by David Huddle. Line eleven is from "The Fish, the Man, and the Spirit" by Leigh Hunt. Line twelve is from *In Time of War* 27 by W. H. Auden. Line thirteen is from *Radical Symmetry* 3 by Tony Lopez. Line fourteen is from "Heroic" by Eavan Boland.

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