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## After Gilles' Requiem

Howard McCord

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HOWARD MCCORD

## CONSUMMATION

It is somewhere else you go  
 when your eyes slip past my face,  
 sweep back inside and turn  
 behind me into a corner  
 I cannot reach with any mirror.

I know it is the secret place of paradise,  
 cut from the world by the arched wall of the spine,  
 its only language a heavy air pushed through the throat,  
 its silences rapped out by ten convulsive fingers.

None of us allows the other entrance  
 and you can never tell me how you live there  
 or what your knowledge is  
 of the god who warms himself inside us all  
 or why he calls you by a different name.

HOWARD MCCORD

## AFTER GILLES' REQUIEM

Pacing the length of an alley,  
 one finger writing in the air,  
 suffering quietly, when  
 a screech owl crashed like a dead limb  
 in front of me, ear tufts  
 taut back like a cat's,  
 crying, wailing, swirling in a maniac  
 dance of pain, died.

The paradigm was mine,  
 the labyrinthine architecture  
 of collapse, the fall,  
 the scream some lover's broken patience,  
 knit and ended simply as a boy with a .22,  
 aiming, firing,  
 prophesying with his eye  
 and one more curling finger  
 willed death.