

Con Chapman

Love, to the Music of an Unknown Composer

. . . we finished, and there we lay
throbbing to Enescu,
or something like that,
according to the DJ.

There was frost on the crazed
window that would be there
when we woke; it, like us, barely
warmed by the light of the morning.

It was a piano piece—
delicate, precise. I thought
you would rise to write down
the name and opus number.

Instead you stayed
beside me, our pulses beating
in syncopated rhythm
until we slumbered.

On Learning a Former Lover Had Died a Suicide

I got the news that you had died a suicide as I was
eating American chop suey, watching the Celtics.
This was, I recalled, an issue for you, that I knew
when every game would be on TV, but hadn't

enough time for you. Also that I was such a
peasant that I would rather eat such stuff than
take you to *Le Bocage*. We had our times, but
you were not made for my world, nor I for yours.

The caller said you'd checked yourself out of
the dementia ward; they thought you were taking
a bus into Middletown. Instead, you left a note
behind that you intended to "do myself harm,"

a stilted phrase, formal, just the sort of thing you'd say
when you were in an uprising against the world.
Apparently no one found it for several days,
touching off a search of the deep river, where

they found you. I found you on-line in motley, a tie-dyed
t-shirt, staring into the camera, one nostril smaller than
the other, that being the side you slept on, next to me,
as we listened to Enescu that night, our bodies humming

for once in tune with each other.

About the Poet

Con Chapman is a Boston poet whose work has appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Light*, *Spitball* and other general circulation and literary magazines. He is currently writing a biography of Johnny Hodges, Duke Ellington's long-time alto sax, for Oxford University Press.