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Intermezzo

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Intermezzo

The *intermezzo* is the music,
the dance between the acts;
the pause suspended
between the notes, as a sparrow dangled
in the sky by a gusting wind;

the respite, the breath; caught in the song;
the fissure between the first brushstrokes,
the mad, obsessive desire for inspiration,
and the hanging of the canvas,
the heady glory of the gallery;

the moldy fragrance between
the voluptuous decay of winter
and the dreamy pining of spring;
the lulling descent of a shard
of snow, a chip of crystalline sky,
to its billet in the drift below;

the limbo between signing
the paper for a sergeant's approving
smile and that first killing;
that cruel space between giving
your life and taking another,
all sanctified in impeccable camouflage;

the gulf between the thumb and the button
that releases the missile, that harsh epistle;
that alacrity between wing and earth,
between the rocket fireworks—
ooh! Ah!
and a local, family-size apocalypse;

the instant just before
the pretty, pink pill touches
the tip of the tongue,
a warm, juicy peach in the summer,
just before the chemical nirvana;

that abyss between yearning for death
and the relentless acquiescence of life;

the hesitation between a whim
clattering in the head and the clumsy
words formed at the mouth;
the panging chasm between when the eyes meet
and the fingers shyly interlace;

the *intermezzo* is the humid zephyr,
the *entre nous*,
between our lips just before the kiss;
between that tender spot,
that ingenuous cleft of your thigh,
and the moist, throaty ecstasy of abandon;

the *intermezzo* is the crevice of anticipation
where beauty abides, fleeting and innocent,
that weighty sleep between the days,
that achingly lovely gap,
that throbbing, purplish bruise
between our first, naked spasms
and our last, rattling breath.

-David Sapp
Huron, Ohio



Duomo—Florence, Italy
-Melissa Bradley
College of Saint Benedict