

HAPPY 200TH BIRTHDAY, HENRY

Cambridge: Spring

written by H.R. Coursen, Brunswick, Maine

The window is open, and heat pours from May
outside in the garden, from all the filling leaves,
so that he closes his eyes against the day,
just long enough for the fume of lilac to seize
his old senses again. His eyes come open
on Dante once more – the terror of the boat –
English cannot tell it – sinking down
from mortal weight, deep but still afloat
for its trip across that river. He can find
no myth to coincide, translates the rhymes
as best his language can. And then the wind
falls away to gather all the times,
the times untranslatable, turning
the page to hold the face of a wife burning.



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