

MOST LIKE THE HUMAN VOICE,

Starkey Flythe

In memory, David Reader

the cello. I've heard voices, women's voices,
men's, deep, almost suntanned, the bow drawn
trembling across the past, finding the line
somebody else drew, before, ago, far, ages,
the long lasting, the note held in glass, the rim
muscled fingers, strong arms, the woman's shape,
knees grasping, the unaccompanied suite.
Bach, his mind, moral-scaffolded, tune climbing coil,
fakir's spiral, above, above. He holds us, bears
us. Math music. Twenty something, David,
whatever holds us, holds us aloft, keeps,
hopes. The woman, the cellist, going to buy the dress,
the black dress, the woman sitting there, spreading
her legs, embracing imagination, sawing the bow
back and forth, saying. "I don't think this dress,"
and the saleswoman snatching the dress, "No,
not for what you want a dress for."

at the funeral, the dead man not religious,
played Bach. How few nights later, the boy,
boy he was, David, will be, went where he should not,
to what he couldn't live with, without, white
heat, argument, wanting more, playing less, lead,
the only way to settle fire, habit, what lifted him
when Bach didn't. The dropped bow, the voice,
so like ours, if it were reasonable, still, every note
the dead hear, the rest of us twist the knob for,
never completely clearing static about the score.