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## Two Poems

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## BABY MONITOR

Last night I heard her signal  
Carried on the digital brook  
That flows in the nursery.  
The baby monitor amplified its range.  
Otherwise, it would not have been heard  
By any soul who understood--  
A repeated tapping  
Embedded in the gurgling water;  
Three quick beats followed by two of two--  
*Come in Fred...come in...come in...*  
*Come in Fred...come in...come in...*  
But Fred never responded,  
And, like an automated distress beacon,  
Olive's message kept repeating--  
*Come in Fred...come in...come in...*  
Fred and Olive are nowhere.  
Their cabin sits deserted,  
Their birdhouses condemned,  
But, thanks to them, I can tell you now  
What death is like.  
Confused and lonely,  
They try to contact spouses  
With patterns in a sound machine.  
They are not even close,  
The baby sound asleep...  
*Come in Fred...come in...come in...*

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### THREE JOURNALS

Speaking from what I know of that long ago era,  
Life moved much too quickly, and people rarely  
Kept accounts of their daily lives. Don't forget.  
This was the time of commuter trains, the time  
Of morning coffee gulped to the sound of a screen  
No one was watching. For the most part, the details  
Of their day-to-day existence are lost to us.  
In the case of my current subject, we have only  
A fragmentary record, and we see him first  
At nine years old only because his mom bought him  
This leatherbound diary for Christmas...Go ahead.  
...I trust you. On January 1, as you can see,  
He was filled with excitement. Here he scribbles  
About ham, science books, and how he made  
The control panel of a spaceship out of a thing  
Called Lite Brite. Note how each day there is less  
And less detail until, by mid-March, he is reduced  
To entries like this: "Dear Diary, Today  
Was a good day," or, conversely, "Dear Diary,  
Today was a bad day." While I am happy that  
The good days outnumbered the bad in 1973,  
Such brevity does little for my research.  
Enough of that.

Next is this tattered, yellow  
Legal pad. It picks up the story nine years  
Later between his freshman and sophomore years  
In college. He was bored at home that summer,  
Cutting lawns. One afternoon, surveying the world  
From a hillside of dandelion, he convinced himself  
That a girl one hundred miles away, in the shadow  
Of the furthest mountain range, was in love  
With him. He was wrong. When the diary trails off

Scott Thomas

THREE JOURNALS, Page 2, continued stanza

That September, he was sitting in his dormitory  
In the shadow of the furthest mountain range.  
Though disappointed in love, it seems  
There were always friends knocking at his thin door...

...which brings us to his last journal. He was 32,  
Still without a girlfriend or wife: this diary,  
Sometimes comical, often sad, documents  
His desperate attempts at finding love in a cold,  
Uncaring world. Then, as now, love was an  
Elusive thing, and the questions he poses will be  
Familiar to you: Does love come through persistent  
Effort like a Boy Scout lighting a campfire  
With only a piece of flint and a pocketknife,  
Or does it come, whether you deserve it or not,  
Like a forest fire borne of a lightning strike?  
He has no answers for us. In the final entry,  
The last time we ever hear from him, he is assessing  
Yet another prospect. "We'll see tomorrow if she  
Is the one," he concludes. Then, it is almost as if  
The next day never came (though we know it did:  
I checked the database. He lived to be a very  
Old man.) Interesting, isn't it? What does it mean?  
Could it be that she was indeed the "one" he spoke of,  
That now, with the answer revealed to him, with love  
Putting a final end to his quest, he had neither  
The time nor inclination to write? Should I  
Complain? After all, history's loss is his gain.