

# Leonore Wilson

## The Pianist at the Window

For Louise Canepa (Italian composer)

Here she is again, so thin, one would say captive, did summer ever leave—no one has climbed the hill in longer than one can remember—he used to, the songster from the '60s who lost his boy to opiates, it was cyclic, he walking through the vines, the canopies of oaks, the blooming white madrones...

oh and sometimes she could hear his voice, opening like heavy shutters, and she inclined her heart toward his though they never met, she composing as the wind trussed the wide tall limbs, she

who lost one eye to cancer, part of her throat so it hurt to yawn, but she was ceaseless in composing, no question, Mahler sustained her, the pitch of the cry, gash, gush form of outwardness; great mantle of individuality gleaming, revealing bluish moon of day. Her fingers walked over the piano keys as if over an alpine path, walked in nervous

ceaselessness like water holding sky and time; fiery apples in the orchards left from one planted a century ago—sweet strange musk, and see her soft face in the window looking through, her smile a deferential sound of a church bell

coming out of nowhere, water holding sky and time, oh heavy days of cancer—chain suspended in the air of which one link holds the whole brass anchor, she will burrow out of nausea, the heaviness in her belly as if she were with child again, the uneasy fatigue, the desire to stave off death, the keys bride-white, and the sharps dusk dark

when she was a young mother sitting as if all time had come to this the nursing of the child while the swallows rode the lowest currents, reddish, seeking feed from the tilled field, didn't Mahler feel the weight of his early demise too, his trembling aorta

A call and response when the mind is loose and undone, everything seems to be slipping through, slipping and cannot be reached, and then history starts up again, tonal blooming big as day like thousand of voice boxes, like new shoots glowing, wet curled tips pointing in every direction, see the resistant pianist loosening the muscles of her fingers,

her pale knuckles, aging dancers, gliding, forgetting as one feels upon waking, that process of falling and squinting, the dream world cutting loose, oh sometimes it is hard to go on, christening the hours with his embryonic music, and sometimes you get stiff-

necked, you taste only bitterness because you want to live, you want to laugh as if you had libation after gleaming libation, a kind magnificent turning pages like tomorrow and tomorrow, your shuddering hands with its body of all symphony, spark of ownership, spiral staircase of sound upon sound, breaking over you like the carbon molecules

the world wants more of you more of you like a breeze passing with the hospitality that planets make even when there is no one to hear them, exquisite as the embroidered tablecloth you made, the paper lanterns, so tears became a benison in your lover's eyes.

**Leonore Wilson** is a former professor of English and creative writing from Northern California. Her work has been featured in such magazines as *Quarterly West*, *Third Coast*, *Iowa Review*, *Pif*, *English Journal*, etc. She helps maintain her 100-year-old cattle ranch in the Napa Valley.