

Nel Lago del Cor

November roses bloom, perfectly formed conic
blossoms, the petals furled, rose pink, shell,
palest yellow, cream, in the afternoon's shifting

light: blue, gray, amber, umber. UMBER:
the shade of autumn, of November, dawn
and dusk, the sky's scant slant refracted

glance. O brightening glance. Dante
the pilgrim walked in morning light, woke
to it after terror, a piteous night, pitiful

knight, and the light, the sweet season
touched him, spoke, the way sun speaks
when it touches earth, woke his spirit,

stirred it to hope. This morning I sit in
a cold room full of warm color, looking at
a clutch of autumn flowers cut yesterday:

red-violet aster, scarlet rose, orange zinnia,
burgundy chrysanthemum. In the tops
of the gold ginkgos the sun is sounding,

the sky reaches into blue cold. My body's
cold, warm, hurting, healing. Eight hundred
years ago, Dante heard the sun, the season

speak. This morning I will do laundry,
lug trash and recycling out to the curb,
put clean sheets on my bed. As light rises

from the horizon's tea green, amber, rose,
I drag words out of what will surely betray
me: what Dante calls the lake of my heart.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sandra Kohler is the author of *The Country of Women* (CALYX Books 1995), *The Ceremonies of Longing* (University of Pittsburgh Press 2003), and *Improbable Music* (WordTech Communications 2011). Her work has also appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *The Gettysburg Review*, *The New Republic*, *Tar River Poetry*, and *Beloit Poetry Journal*. A part-time teacher of adult education courses, she lives in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

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