What Is Given [ANNOTATED VERSION]
Phyllis Cole-Dai

*—a cento after May Sarton**

I woke to the meadow bright silver with frost
and brilliant sunlight through yellow leaves over the barn. *(31)*
What if I cannot find myself inside it? *(12)*

I suffer from the tearing up of roots.
Loss has made everything sharp. *(32)*
Angers *(27)* take the marrow of my energy. *(44)*
I feel it draining out like sand. *(86)*
I am forced to my knees again and again. *(76)*

We are never far from death. *(118)*
But there is nothing that we suffer
that does not hold the seed. *(67)*
When help is needed, it is there. *(74)*

This morning, two small miracles: *(35)*
The first is *light. (47)*
In a supreme moment of light *(54),*
one becomes aware of the sacred.
It is all a matter of getting
to the center of the beam, *(54)*
to live in the changing. *(89)*

Then, the delight *(47)* of space to *be: (57)*
a whole day before me *(106)*, an open place *(12)*,
a lovely shelter in which to welcome a guest *(105)—*
real life *(11)*, to be taken in and cherished. *(130)*

Look long enough, with absolute attention,
at a flower, a stone, the bark of a tree, a cloud*—(99)*
they are presences. *(11)*
Something like revelation takes place.
Something is given. *(99)*
Each holds the whole mystery. *(118)*
(Look through me and find yourself.) *(97)*

Whatever peace I know
rests in *(16)* the wrinkled purple eggplant
standing up in a bowl surrounded by sweet potatoes. *(27)*

*All lines from May Sarton's *Journal of a Solitude* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1973).

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