



Townes Van Zandt

"If I Needed You"

*The Late Great  
Townes Van Zandt*

1972

Tomato

# A Love Poem for Past & Future Squeezed Tightly into Now

Sam Rasnake

"a treasure for the poor to find"

– Townes Van Zandt, "If I Needed You"

Winter is here with its bitter, prophetic rage.  
The cattle, huddled under trees, know what to do.  
Smoke rises along the road to the lake.  
At the bottom of the well, cool water over dark.  
And the years blur past us, a streak of frames  
in motion telling yet another story.

I've heard your voice

*If I needed you*

showing the muscle in my chest the way – your eyes a window,  
your hands a truth as you talk me through the night.

Birds are stirring. Sunrise over the ridge colors the wind –  
the field an easel, the fence a brush, your words are mountains,  
a tremble of leaves over the ground

*Would you come to me*

in the whatever of the whenever – *if* is a lonely place.

I know pain waits for me, and silence will open its beautiful head.  
Before the room empties, before the bits of talk fall to the floor  
then disappear, before these walls echo dreams  
under rocks in the river east of here,  
you can tell me – you can tell me one more time  
the hole inside of everything – your breath on my cheek  
to keep my eyes from closing.

You'll touch my hand

*I would swim the sea*

and the stars at midnight will be my only map.