

## Unexpected Melodies

London, Cortauld Institute, Somerset House

One morning when London Summer  
was the color of slate,  
I walked to Somerset House,  
a massive granite structure  
that once commanded diplomats,  
solemn, serious.

Yet inside  
among the Impressionists in the Cortauld Gallery,  
Cezanne's lush paintings shimmered,  
still lifes with yellow pears,  
green tree branches swaying  
thick brush strokes, soft edges,  
a glimpse of his joy  
made tangible,  
the presence of color and light.

As I walked outside again  
though the overcast sky still felt heavy,  
there in the center courtyard  
fifty fountain streams  
erupted from the murky surface  
random flourishes of water  
bursting like Handel's trumpets,  
eight feet, twelve feet,  
soaring at different heights,  
sometimes disappearing  
into nothing at all.

And one by one,  
people gathered to watch  
rosy-cheeked children  
darting , leaping through the water  
in shorts, rolled up pants,  
bathing suits even,  
sopping with laughter,  
polo shirts soaked through.  
They ran in between spurts  
on the gray cobblestones,  
a squealing girl wearing red barrettes  
covering a surge with her toes,  
a boy zig-zagging  
two rows at a time.