Winter 1994

I Remember Rilke

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I remember Rilke sopping wet, sprawled out as usual all over his lilac bed, newfangled breezes firing up his freezing rooms, crumbs of sesame drugs loose in his killer hair. Like 91% of the rest of us he lied about the time he spent alone. He spent most of his time on the telephone. And the rest in pursuit of a spider he'd run across at supper, striding up his butter knife. He was one handsome devil, all tensile muscle built for rapid travel. He never once said please or hesitated to crawl into dinner plates. Such a relief to see a grown, living spider, astride a trivet, declaiming against minutiae, by simple virtue of his bearing, the unrequired champion
of infinity, enjoying himself at the table, encouraging Rilke to commit to memory his adoration of a certain shade of violet. Without apology, without so much as a nod toward regret, he ambled up a woman's arm and turned like a friendly bracelet around her sensible wrist. I don't truly remember much more about Rilke.