Assessing Beauty

by Gary Hardaway

We appraise the sunset and account it
beautiful as any ever seen. Is it
that particular red, the composition
of the clouds, the silhouetted townscape,
the distant valley on the right?
We can't be sure. Perhaps it is
some slight exaggeration of one
or several elements that steals our breath.
We only know it moves us chemically
and deep inside the chest. Our questions
long outlast the moment.

Art survives to interrupt routine respiration
every sight or hearing. How Cornell's
ingenious boxes, made of cast-off bits of enterprise,
pull us into reveries of space, time
and history remains a studied mystery.
We go with him nonetheless to where
geography ceases, maps revise themselves
and, as we look, we are ourselves revised.

In Enzo's perfect shade of red,
the 330 P4, at rest, pulls us
through the Tertre Rouge at giddy speed,
voluptuous as Raphael and sleekly
menacing as Messerschmitts.

A Brandenburg plays in another room.
Exquisite equations rise to life
and dance for our interior delight.

If I knew beauty, I could

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wake her where she dreams,
persuade her to inform each
gestured choice I make.
But then, I would be dazzled
by my makings, forget
each day's analysis and sums, see
the world as indivisible, and starve.