



# The Poetry Of Persuasion

Just on the edge

of Spring, lilac's purple  
not quite open, morning's  
crisp after ten days of rain.  
Occidental Park is sun-streaked,  
ivy-covered bricks near the shelters,  
familiar faces, bags of belongings,  
coats peeled off in a pile. The square  
is mostly empty, just a few of us  
coming, going, standing by.  
The giant chess board quiet.  
Green café tables scattered.  
Two old guys leaned against  
the empty information booth.

He's likely in his early thirties,  
still full of hesitant hope  
and techno suspicion. Just  
days ago, two men bombed  
the finish line of the Boston Marathon,  
and he can't keep himself from singing,  
I just want you to know who I am . . .  
His voice strains, working his face  
up to red. Again, I just want you  
to know who I am! He mumbles  
the lyrics as his hands implore  
the white guy on his cell phone  
in a square of sunlight, the black guy  
stretched out on the steps,  
the muscled woman running  
under the new leaves of maples,  
when everything's made to be broken,  
I just want you to know who I am.

I don't see how this ends,  
whether anyone applauds  
or turns their heads,  
or even gets curious.  
I leave the parking lot, on my way  
somewhere, something  
I cannot remember. His voice still ringing,  
and it is not exactly beautiful:  
I just want you to know who I am.

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