

## Manatees

Would it be okay to say I love you  
loving manatees, their playful curiosity  
& propeller-scarred torsos, dangerous  
tangos in fickle currents of water?

At Lincoln Center, pink ballet slippers  
hang from a Linden tree. Were they flung from  
fingers of an angry dancer? Tossed high  
instead for joy? Bright ornaments. Coy fruit.  
I pass the pint of Absolut to see you  
put it to your lips. There's no snake

in the garden. Just you & me & serpentine  
days twining along the trellis. I reach  
for those silky slippers. No sourapples,  
no sour grapes. We throw lettuce  
to manatees who gavotte in the fountain.  
Watching them frolic like F. Scott & Zelda,  
we're certain they'll ask us to join them.

Credit: John Hoppenthaler &  
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