“Chocolates”

My mother taught me how to prize them: on the couch, my father gone to bed, watching Audrey Hepburn, Deborah Kerr choose among suitors, decide what to wear. We'd allocate and savor: marzipan and Cointreau, mocha truffle and praline, soft cinnamon cream covered with crisp dark crunch.

I learned to discriminate sweet sludge, generic, from the known and European: Rumpelmayer, Neuhaus, Lindt, Perugina. Later, too old for easy endings, we'd demand more than our share, sting each other to tears, mouths closed as though we'd swallowed bees.

Like cuckoo clocks and racing cars chocolates require precision, but like capers or caviar they must be consumed before they bloom or break. And then they dissolve to nothing on the tongue, like names called out in anger, and in love.

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