

POEM BY DON BOGEN

Only Music

I am become like a man standing alone,
one free among the dead.

Gesualdo on CD:
every surprising half-dissonance clear
in mathematical air.

A slim black computer is singing to me,
a laser is reading notes.

This impossible voice
reduced to perfection and reproduced,
a woman taking an angel's part written for a boy.

And the instruments
silent: no viol or harpsichord,
not even Gesualdo's supple lute which is now dust.

Doublet and hose disembodied.

The lady at last only a wraith of beauty,
flagrante delecto caught
in a liner note.

A hollowness cutting off time in the living room.

Passion breathes in odd corners:
five voices in a braid,
the sweet one singing off-key.

This pleasure in the ache of loss.
The small parts that don't fit shine.

Digital—it's there or it's not.

I have retreated to the castle which carries my name.
Only music will console me.

About the author: Don Bogen is the author of four books of poetry, most recently *An Algebra* (University of Chicago 2009), and a critical study of Theodore Roethke. His translation of *Europa: Selected Poems of Julio Martínez Mesanza* is just out from Dilogos Books. Awards for his work include grants from the Camargo Foundation and the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts and a Fulbright lectureship at the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry of Queen's University, Belfast. He teaches at the University of Cincinnati and serves as Poetry Editor of *The Cincinnati Review*. His website is www.donbogen.com. The present poem originally appeared in *The Cortland Review*.