

## Sheer Genius

I have discovered a new friend (at least  
I find myself hoping so) the afternoon before—  
talking about poetry over coffee, tea  
and beet cake . That's right I said  
"beet," B – E – E - T, as in the red-root,  
cake. (Hey, I was skeptical too until  
I tried a slice.)

So, feeling strong enough to stand up to gusts  
of music that on another day might blow me down,  
I decide I will continue listening to my tape  
of Luisa Miller this morning while driving back  
to New York City.

And as the final strains are sounding (Luisa  
dead in her father's arms, her love,  
Rudolpho, having slain the villian, Wurm,  
before he, too—that is Rudolpho—succumbs  
to the same poison that has killed Luisa)  
I marvel, overwhelmed by the surge,  
at Verdi's genius: his ability to merge  
seamlessly, with a tympanum's final roll,  
this sound of rumble strips alerting me  
to an approaching toll.

Steve Bloom  
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