

LYN HEJINIAN

## NINE NOCTURNAL FRAGMENTS

I

The curtain is flapping—it slaps against the shaking  
We are subject to the rule of metamorphosis. Somewhere there's a  
Douglas fir  
pane of the open window. The cruel dialogue continues  
that is a carpenter with a pigeon soul. Symbols work  
that is a fisherman thinking he's tending his nets, a gecko  
on the soul, true signs of the false or false signs  
They are butter and several camels. As duty is to beauty  
of the true. What a negation! They are rose-stags! Goat-dahlia!  
the weed through dew is to thinking: resolute!

2

In the spilling world sleeps a dog. Of narrow lines  
the brotherhood and meats of carbon steel  
of breath and theft and lentils rest  
with girls in army tents. *That* is a guard, he said,  
and *these* are shops, Madame.

3

I found a wing today when walking  
I remarked in pity, they cannot even keep their own names  
The woods around it have it, it is theirs  
Around a hill, through a valley, tinged with pity  
One of my favorite things: wind in deciduous trees  
Speaking of description: vulture aloft near the sea

Open to change—or don't  
Gulls in good weather, dark crow ducking  
The gulls pull at the air

No better than reason is the strut of a pigeon  
No farther than the mountains is P  p  's bowl of water  
Dream—idea—personality comes on like a bull—the light—flush, bull

4

The moral equivalent of cutting up old paintings  
Guys! we need a password  
Moments refer to one another  
And there's a barrel I didn't fill  
In squares laid out like a checkerboard upon interpretation  
And have simply to wonder and they begin to mean something  
Off the knowledge of the softer light at page 210  
A field and powerless, the captain is a horse, a way of living  
Durably and inexorably and currently advantageously industriously  
grumpily  
I find it hard to hear you, did you say alibi or apple  
As a horse—and swiftly, steadily they do imagine them  
The particular yellows of the era  
A small bird flew before me and he was careful  
My mother is wearing a beige sweater and checkered skirt now  
that she's dead

5

Go to the back of the class, Foggy Rolland. The central character is not Loretta Claire.

Alfonzo and I could easily pick some low-hanging green fruit. As they came off the branch into our palms they would ping like fresh water splashing into a metal bucket or smack like dice on a table.

Terence is feeling kind of tense and dishonest, and that's going to get in the way of our work. The clouds will precede us, soft as music, light as spray.

Every antagonist must be resigned to the enmity of the others. Tomorrow we can gather again in the white plastic bistro for a quick latte with laptop.

From the left comes a shout: You f-ing cultural pimps! Yes, I have missed being in the laboratory yearning for data.

6

Pipe me to pastures still and be  
A message sent from one neuron to another  
Irritable in an irritating room, perfectly-attuned  
Like this slick and seeing ball

If sunlight strikes rock and the sea shines  
It is oratorical, that is the bounce is so  
The second frog's heart rate slowed too

7

Seven horses prance across the parking lot across  
the street and I could pasture one in the backyard I received  
yesterday from the Union (ACT-UAW) which I support  
so I'll want to do so. Could you change the venue twice  
and make it up in a hot office with some magazines  
that you could drop out the window on the anniversary  
of Earl Warren's inauguration as Governor of California?  
He was a Polish Jew who fled the Nazis and I'd like to know what he said  
to Jack Spicer and Robert Duncan about the American family  
dog tagged and living in a bomb shelter.  
I had one of those too, it was M6802, a mare.

8

Notes before dawn in the spring  
Of the year sound seven  
To send with the summer a brazen  
Unmelodious, peremptory, nagging, comical “week”  
To wake  
With many regrets  
Like the cattle egrets that follow herds  
From a tree whose name is standing terrain in the most bombed-out city  
To be quoted here  
Translated into human with wings agig milling  
Like a child’s mouth to a nipple  
Whose name it has yet to speak  
In the language of its mother and father and fantasies  
With an egg more kissable than a lime  
Of ideas between sounds rung from a bucket of authoritative metal  
By slight of hand whose letters follow  
And decline like the waning nouns  
By the gray bridge where the whirling alders are  
Like humans sticking to unperceived agreements

9

Lost after all. You can leave any time  
This rat’s like me, she has a human soul  
Too late: duty has become a habit, habit a duty  
Poems distilled from other poems will probably pass away  
But there’s dance in the old dame yet  
No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before