

After The Fall

Shed no tears where hearts still beat

in the walled-off dark of prisons
in the factories' mechanized oubliettes.

Outside these walls, a world still waits
where day and night revolve on their hidden axis
the pain and joy of our brittle lives mapped out
in the lazy arabesques of falling maple keys

the wind-turned pirouettes of sneakers
strung up by their laces from the power lines
where the stooped shoulders of old tenements
blot out the sun.

Mayflies bursting, winged from paper husks
green consumed in the fiery mantles of autumn trees

I no longer believe in any dialectics besides these

fleeting moments of peace
like lulls in the assembly line

when I live through the memory of your skin against mine

shadow-paintings of wild horses, running from the lights of passing cars
on the soot-blackened cave walls of suburban underpasses

every vast and ancient magic that this world of men has killed, and pined for
alive in the surging *yang* of our joined bodies.

Beneath canopies of razor wire, the leaves of stunted oaks yellow
and trace descending arcs into the mud

my eyes finding poetry where there is none
in the lilting grace of their paths;

the dip and swell of longhand
the swooning curve of ampersands

rain filling the indents worn by listless feet
on a dirt track that leads nowhere.

Master, I have pled
my sin is so great that surely you must envy me, if nothing else
the wholeness of my wretched state

inviolate and pure
all things begetting peace and war

sleeping like dark seeds
in yearning's fleshy ovum.

Each month I swell with distant tides
weep carmine blood, pierced by the moon's horned tips
the body's rituals, strange and animal
in cloistered rooms of antiseptic white.

At the nurse's wire-meshed window I show the pills on my tongue
the empty cavity of my mouth once I have swallowed
gloved fingers searching between cheek and molar

what bitter grains of truth I have gleaned
in this poverty
hidden, precious contraband
beneath my tongue.

Passing days haemorrhage into one another

my eyelids prised open every morning
in the light of artificial dawn
while you, far from me
are the earth's darkened hemisphere
teeming cities of neon
washing over the sleeping planes of your face.

Outside the realm of clumsy words
there are no such thing as endings
only new things made from the old.

I have dreamed, as dreamers always will
that I stood alone in the aisle of a church
like the one in the town where I grew up
and instead of the bloody deaths of saints

each stained glass window was a back-lit painting
of you and I, making love
at the end of the world.

And you were the first of all fallen angels
with the dawn sky laid across your chest
and I was the red-haired witch

and everywhere around us gnashed the swords
of all god's righteous men
while we burned together on their pyres

our light more beautiful
than all the heavens' jealous rays.