

CINEMA VERITÉ

The moon rises
from a jagged silhouette
of date palms.

Every shadow is a door.

There's a cave in the cliff
where the only sound
is water and its echo
entering the silence
of millennia, one drop at a time.

The sun rises
over the date palms.

How different they seem.

Though the mind can run
backward, time cannot.

CAVE PAINTING

An egret's tight, white
chevron cuts through
heavy weather and kites
down to the lake where it takes
root and turns
to bleached bone, the question
-mark of its neck cocked
at alert for the slip
of silver through clouds
of silt, an image sketched
on stone like a totem
ghost whose actual body
knifed through a slur of rain.

CHANGING PARTNERS

He brings her flowers, pinched
from the widow's window
box, takes her
away from her books, her thoughts,
to walk in the city at night
when the streets are slick
with rain, streaking, blurring
lights from the shops, the chic
bars, the traffic, the fountains.

She cannot hold him. His face
breaks and slides away
in her dreams. He appears
without warning, sweeps
her up in his brief
obsessions. When he leaves
there is the pulse
of an absent bell, a space
aching with promise.

She believes he will grow
thin in the waste
beyond her inexhaustible
yes, will come home to rest,
and stay... until
his carelessness outlasts
her patience and she sleeps
with a man who calls her twice
a day and stays overnight on weekends.

FULL CYCLE

So here we are
shaken, but still standing
among the scattered remains.
(break)

We thought it could never happen
again. Using stencils, templates
and measured breath, we had removed
the triggers and constructed
barrier latitudes. Careful, always,
to prioritize everything that was not
episodic, we sailed home
to a permanence of plans
and windows. Perhaps
there were too many exurbs
and dispensations, terminals
without margin controls. Undetected
resistance must have accumulated
like the voltaic pressure in sea caves,
jamming the system's chords and scales.

Whatever it was
that failed, the rest
is not silence but a sound
like shed skin blown through the corridors.

BARRACUDA

A pale green shape, idling
in the pale green tide,
so indistinct I'm not sure it's there
until I look deeper and find its long, spare
shadow printing the rippled sand of the sea floor.

So, darkness confirms reality, restores
this barely visible, shimmering thing
to the world in which it strikes like a knife without warning,

a world where nature crawled up out of the seaweed
and climbed a double helix till it hatched
mystery and beauty matched
with deception, arrogance, violence, greed.