

Exxon

Tires scrape like the heartbeat of the driver
spinning around a pump
as the numbers blink 2:31 a.m.
I do not smell gasoline, strangely,
it's the total darkness of the street that gives off a smell
as the only light shines from the flickering window
invisible from behind the shuttered door.
Fingers scrape against the ring, which felt
like the rough leather of the wheel
as the blunt tang of gasoline punches against the open windows
like the wind beating against the tires,
as the paresthesia travels and tickles its way
into dripping from a singular eyelash.
The reluctant gas pedal of fear and exhilaration
mixes together into confusion as they separate
and form two distinctive circles from the angels themselves.
I will slam on the brakes and drive
into the darkness above, as there are no stars
at all in the blurry and vicious vision.
Glowing trucks slam into sleep and call *nunc somnum*,
like the scraping and soft beating of exhaustion.

Gessoing Saxophones

Slate chrysanthemums shaken
into flecks of yellow, tapered
at the end with a slight curl
as fifteen, or fourteen if you squint,
traces of pewter gray glued
to the gesso, smooth grizzly
lines over a background of black
and blue. The third gorge,
which raises from the stack
of paint like folds of miniature flowers,
peers amber above the ashy blue.
These ends too taper,
leaning slightly towards themselves
crawling across the mess
of conscious and calculated smudges.

Lunar Paraphrase

Orbits of the oracle send
her praise to the one
who ogles and grasps
at the *sidus of nocte*
barely floating in her vision
as her reflection stabs
the knives into willing
and olive eyes,
simply caressing her retina
though it meant
to harm. She asks
her whys and whats,
wheres and will happens,
at the empty, obligated
complexion of bulbous wax,
and in a blink of time
she's back where she started
ogling from BCE to CE,
eons of orbits.

Bar at the Folies Bergere, Manet, 1882

No one reaches for them.
They watch her from their goblet
as her reflection in another woman
speaks softly in a whisper she cannot hear.

Alone, she fiddles fingers against marble
amid the cries and calls of the crowd.
The oranges tell her to speak to the man
who taps his feet and twiddles his mustache,

but her vacant eyes can say nothing,
tired of the bottles and beauties
flitting past and slowly draining
the evening that goes on without her,

while the woman, who tightens herself
into a velvet hourglass wound with wires
of cane posing as whale bone,
watches as hands pluck them away,
one after another.

Heliotropism

I softly cry for what was lost
while gravity quivers and plucks the stem
like the soft shake of a leaf as a gust
gasps for air and glistens.

My throat and the heat of my shallow lungs
breathe their ruthless hold between
my own false and hopeless myths
while I try to compose my mind away

as rain washes the dawn from a silent sky,
melting into wet, damp pavement,
weaving between street lights and stop signs
like torn plastic, churned by the wind.