

Jorie Graham

UNTITLED TWO

And shades approached. A masonry of shades, one in a parking lot. Give him the darkest inch your mind allows. Hide him in _____ if you will. But where? And *fearless truth*, where is the thing? And excellence, and skill, all throbbing in the parking lot. And fashion, too, and brute strength, flickering. . . . One that did earn an honest living. One like a statute—lean—one like some gold someone is looking for, one gray-eyed like a verdict, one ribboned with bits of valor, or is it *stringy* now with *blips of laughter*? The parking-lot coagulates, quasi-maternal, and strict with cradling unnumbered slots—one tall one fingering his hair as he arrives, one coughing as he keeps on wondering. They gather round, gloat, tangle, clot—they're many-eyed—they forage. Over the gleaming fins and hoods, they seem to chatter. The windshields singe with them, but then they clear. Overhead sparrows snarl-up, and river, dive, making a dark clean thought, a bright renown, and quote each other endlessly, and throng in hundreds in surrounding trees. The shades have liquefied. I try to think them up again. The banks of cars—the lot is filling up—now oscillate in morning-sun. And the sunlight, toothless now, how it keeps drinking-in. And thinking, thinking. Until the walled-up day hives-open once again. And they foam-out along its veins. Syllable by syllable. I give them liberty. They gnarl, they sweep over the hubs, into the panes, they fill the seats. Somewhere the tea is cold. Somewhere the fire is almost dead. Somewhere a fear that has no form.

a brutish click, sound of black-water lobbying,
and then one girl, like a stairway appearing in the exhausted light,
remembers the *reason* with a fast sharp gasp,
and laughter rises, bending, from the chalice of five memories,
as they move past us towards the railing of the lot,
one stepping over, quick, one leaping high, giggling, red hair above her as she
drops—two whispering, one hands in pockets looking down
as she, most carefully, leans into the quick step
over the silver rail—oh bright forgetting place—then
skips to catch up with the rest,
and the rail gleams, and the rail overflows with corrugated light.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL OF *NOT FEELING*

As where a wind blows.
I can teach you that.
The form of despair we call “the world.”
A theft, yes, but gossipy, full of fear.
In which the “I” is seen as merely a specimen,
incomplete as such, overendowed,
maneuvering to rid itself of biological
precipitates—hypotheses, humilities,
propensities. . . .
Do you wish to come with me?
You know how in a landscape you see distances?
We can blur that. We can dissolve it
altogether. You know the *previous age*?
How it lacks shape until it’s cut-away by
love? We gust that lingering, moody, raw affection
out, we peck and fret until it’s
gone, the flimsy courage, the leaky luggage
in which you carry round
your drafty dreams—of form, of hinged
awarenesses, all interlocking-up—dream on—
the chain is rattling that you’ve cast,
yet it is made of air, of less, look, here
it mirrors, here it curves