

Ann Lauterbach

BRAMBLE PORTRAIT

1.

Stunned under legacies of a statue's respite
the stitched light
boldly faced, facsimile's ghost
held up
not yet, not ever unleashed, and
you/the child
 forgets to come to say
 this inscription, this

solid state

 variable in the garden, memory of one evening,
the trip resisted
(who names it forgets its name)

 and the dream shows
 a picture held forth as phantom
(which it cannot
 and is never really so)

What is it?

2.

Here I comes
bewitched by the pregnant field
the undressed moon
song-stripped
 (unimaginable)

and her daring insignias
time-rinsed, contractions riveted to heat's
withdrawal into the garden's
scented floor, its mossy cradle dangerously stuffed.

Forgotten in rapid transition
the street's drone goes
go go and
to the blue cabin *go*
homily infested
where the dream ate the last shambles—
the cut-out leaves dripping ink,
postcards brilliantly unsent.

Whose shredded tale is this? The I
shifts tableaux, her
head turns, and the cerulean evening
is flat, shade laid down and
tucked far under her pillow with the coins,
 dragon from Nepal,
 bell, coral wing, one-armed monk,
 broken glass under a broken urn, torn wing,
turquoise stones, painted Russian egg,
 small blackboard with huge storm of roses, girl
 sitting among crumbs and dry petals, hair uplifted in wind,
the cock, pin-feathers erect, the delicate lineage of the kiss.

3.

Mind's reliquary of fables is privately endorsed.
These are not colors. They cannot be touched.
Now, here, in an insatiable cancellation, the figures are refuted
as ornamental, their histories
burdened, facades musically transgressed.
How can reason inflect water? How
can the swimming child come up for air, her mouth intact?

Had we not said “*the drink*” “*the beautiful*” “*the bright today*”?
Look! Morning stampedes inarticulate shade
into a caress, loose
and constrained, variable and same,
moving along the timeline
as along the threshold of a ledge—
the whole of any sky, the side of the building coated
in ochre paint, the wedding dress netting lost air,
black-and-gold spider’s halter of thread—
fleet engine leased to awe’s precarious delay
whose appearance is only dawn
clutching at night’s *flit flit flit*
as if against the elegy’s insidious decorum,
as if already counted among the day’s inequities.