

HILLSIDE FISH MARKET

Last night the market burned. The windows black
and ugly hold no magic fish. I'd seen
a buffalo nudge the glass and turn her back
to me. Brown scales as big as quarters gleam
through water gold as pee. I watch him crack
the spines of fish. Like polished shoes the sheen
of heads surrounds the butcher's feet. She rolls
and air-pearls leave the tank like silver souls.

In August ponds are smooth as oil. A frog
is polished, emerald jade. Old mountains steam
in clouds. Still waters mirror heaven's fog
between the lily pads. A China dream
is cracked as backs of fish move quick and jog
through rubbery stems. The lilies tip their cream
and yellow flowers. Kim Lee's line goes tight
and slits the leaves; a nose is dragged to light.

The night the Hillside Market burned, I slept
and dreamed of fish. I watched them weave between
my friskly legs and nibble bubbles kept
in hairs. A tender fleshy mouth, a clean
and gentle "O" withdrew my pearls. I slept
while buildings burned. A blackened cough, a mean
and ugly vomit licked the fish. They died
in splintered glass with chair legs black and dried.