Four Poems

Reel-to-reel

It could be this or any city.
A man emerges from a taxi
in a sharkskin jacket,
snow breaking against the blue-green
sheen of his shoulders.
It’s a minor scene, almost missed
as the shadow from an airplane overhead
bleeds the image into blankness,
my exquisite wound.
You would ask how I am.
Mostly I am saved by greed and desire.
Greed for the season’s voltage in fur,
desire for the wax-shine of red stiletto heels,
movie prize of some long-ago actress, not me,
and she shall witness our breaths fly out,
ever missed, impossibly measured,
this pox on the living,
like ghosts.

Fifth Lucky Dragon

There was a dazzling light,
and the sea became
brighter than day.
— Yoshio Misaki

Filament of memory:
smooth azure of sea,
 nets filled with starry bodies
and more stars above
as he sinks further into
a dream of a woman
below uncontained skies,
a certain turbulence in the air
around her and then her voice
so real it startles him awake
to slap of saltwater, salt mist,
work to be done.
He has no name
for what flowers westward,
sea turned light box
for the terrible boat, dawn
scratched out of the sky.
In the blue/gray light
he moves to contend with
the harvest,
heavy and luminous, and it
is not yet
that one-millionth of a second
called critical mass,
and the ashen snow
has not yet fallen
on the eyelashes and faces
of the men who will rejoice
like children numbered
for their graves.
Bohr's Dream

In the beginning there is an idea as if a dead thing stepped out of a man. Lawyers prepare their witnesses and briefs. Invitations issue. The judge arrives with his gavel and his furs. God, a hangman on the piazza, sends his archangel. In the great white courtroom lunch is served, a feast of pheasants and pearls. Applause, flourish of trumpets. O nearness of night. Windless starless night.

These four poems will appear in Legal Studies Forum, Spring 2006, a special issue that is an Anthology of writing by lawyers.

Allegory (Time)

M aybe if we were four hundred times closer to the sun, the moon would be its normal size. Collecting flowers in my cap, I think of those I have sinned against – some without ever touching. This one is for you. As innocent as a seed sprouting in lightly dampened earth, our water turned to wine. It became unconditionally hot. The sky promised not to tell if we would kiss it one more time.

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