

Fall From Grace #2

I want to cut the wrist of autumn.
I want to bleed like a river in mist
under a curse of lingering maples,
under their yellowing fists.

Roses transition between seasons.
In mid-December buds are like stray
baby mouths or tattoos of crescent moons
etched in jail ink on a thigh.

(Did you imagine I'd forget you?)

We are perpetually crossing bridges,
losing our lockets and waiting for planes.
We attend to our watches, springing
forward, falling back, aching for lamplight,
a pier, an alley or mooring we recognize.
We all need a cot for the night.

These are lies.
Kisses on a cheek.
Let's have lunch next week.

I exposed myself to the elements.
I mated with my landscapes.
I stalked arroyos and ocean edges
with anomalous intensity,
immune to sun, wind, current,
warnings, flags.
I should have been arrested.

I have the skin of a woman who
chooses vagrancy. No address or chest X-rays,
florist or priest. A pause you interpret
as an act of autumn,
then clarity at the juncture.
That's why we invented piers.
Arrivals and departures once contained significance.
Lovers at depots know it's not the last day of fall
but corridors of sapphire, patios of cobalt.
Errant stars are red poppies burning down.

I am solitude distilled, refined, alone beneath

coral reefs of constellations, their somber
russet shells like uninhabited bodies
of water abandoned as they slept.

Shifts are inexplicable. Cusps. Margins.
Capitals are renamed, as if in collective suicide.
Constantinople. Peking. Bombay.

These are the constants----
Betrayal, both planned and accidental.
Heartbreak in an auburn dusk.
Hoarse voice and wind in chestnuts.
The itch of agitation scratched like a rash.
The husband who is taken ill.
The daughter struck by a car.
The unexpected diagnosis.

The deliberate fall from grace.