

## Bridge

It is a film set  
The spine of the bridge  
Stretched across the water  
The curtained room opening upon  
A constant staged revelation  
A scripted end  
Written bodies dropped like marionettes  
In clear night air, the harsh beauty of lights  
Tracing every movement  
The enigma of devotion  
A secret pooled against the screen  
And left unsolved  
Mystery ripped into shadows  
The embroidered, unknown statement  
The sky closed in on the stars  
As I watch  
The fragments of pottery  
Wooden stumps,  
The bitten cords of old rope, elided wharves  
Half-revealed hints of older buildings  
Past passed in pain  
Between ribs  
And yet gone  
Body whole  
A dryness of lips, only  
Remembered pictures of a jackknifed figure  
Pleading  
And yet dissolute, nothing outside of me  
Patterns formed from stars  
As I pass over the river  
In darkness

Her hair, when I see it  
Is the shadow of another woman  
Her scented shape  
And unforgiven memories  
The glamour, the hollow eye  
Of the camera  
The offer of completion  
Stretched from sunset endings  
The writing  
Of what is never there  
Into reality  
Then looked back on  
And confirmed, needed  
The best of us wrecked  
By the failure to reach in

And make whole  
Chasing the tail end  
Of fading dreams  
The sullen glories etched across shop fronts  
Pigment-soft attractions  
To belong  
We all believe  
The centre of it  
Can be touched  
And made real  
Longing in bad comedies  
The ghosts of a pretended community  
That once cohered  
A star-spangled past  
And mildewed reminiscence  
Pleading for a stranger's arm  
Long dreamed  
To drop  
A rich mouth to hang open in approval  
And make her real  
Like her dreams  
This power masked in platitudes  
And denial  
Religion and politics  
Doctrine  
The shattered fragments  
Of Kali's severed body  
Lay undiscovered  
And anyway  
No longer fit together  
Only the voice of a man  
A candle-flame guttering in darkness  
Stars all gone  
Forging strength from doubt  
Answers  
Flow like blood

I approach the dusty sheen  
The worn-out magic, electric constellations  
Seen from the bridge  
Points shimmering in haze  
The language of power  
Held in ladders to the moon  
Clearly legible  
Sweet-tasting, scented  
Gifts solemnly promised  
But withheld  
No longer the living  
But the immortality  
Neon lights, faces

Endlessly stretched across billboards  
Bare arms  
The softness of cherry blossom  
Just beyond the muffled glow  
Just beyond the streetlights  
Livid pictures, flesh cut into sky  
In the shape of old prophecies  
Pulled apart  
The iron words of stories  
Tongue across every syllable  
Unsayings  
Unmaking  
Breaks upon the carefully woven  
Tapestry of her body  
The pictures of him  
The romance he carries  
Like steam curling from a hot road  
After rain  
The vanished hints of her fantasy  
Shone the echo in his eyes  
Black emptiness of pupils  
Shot holes  
And nothing  
Her clay man, breath  
Moulding his skin  
Coating his words with sugar  
Making him walk  
Clothing him with need  
But badly made  
The mirror gives the lie away  
Splitting seams  
Onto nothing  
The aromatic poverty,  
Staring at her husk  
Thinly clothed, her own shape  
Beneath  
Its actions  
The reflection of her desire  
The responses  
She makes it make  
Hung before her  
Herself  
Faced with herself

Unbreakable sheen  
Of the black water staring back  
The atrophied concrete, stained brick  
Darkened metal,  
Oily film upon glass  
The wreckage of all the sharp suits and laptops

Giving way to lines, grey stubble  
Sagging asphalt  
In the end her magic word  
The animation poured in quicksilver  
Across his mouth  
Fails  
The wet clay pulls apart  
In her embrace  
Dismembered river mud, he falls back  
Into storm-water, brown with topsoil  
Shattered bark,  
Shopping trolleys and car tyres  
Sunk treasure  
Futures  
Never made apparent  
His body, dissolved, rinses her fingers  
Leaving hidden scriptures  
Desire,  
Continual desire,  
Her atonement, the hidden making of herself  
Draining from her palms  
The price of her spell  
Written in the space  
Between the long columns of fire  
Reflecting upwards  
From the broken spines of buildings  
Forever drowned  
And forgotten  
The hand  
That could always close about  
His invented skin  
The mockery of not holding  
The words that she had spoken

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