

ALMOND TUT AND THE MERCURY BOY

Almond Tut and the Mercury Boy posted
bills yesterday, and then bail, and afterward aped

slouched junkies
in City Square. Slumming

of course, but they've indeed
OD'd on each other and that roughhouse sun

that sought to shatter its sky with its round
ball peen. They took

turns leaning on the unwindowed
vent building: one the weary

hipster, reckless transient, scratching
out songs on his

gazetteer; the other the kitten
twining his neck.

Exiled, exalted, they made a wild
pile, immiscible asphalt lodged

in slate. Mercury's liquid
eyeliner ran with hot

Cadillacs—Eyes, O eyes,
that you might see the film

they make by masking out
your one desire: sight beyond the *mise-en-scene*.

Let their abandon be your constraint. But for now,
they doze.

And above, the missing highway commences
its run west off the planet, to lift

only hearses through
the sun, through the sea.

Chloë Joan López 2006

CRITIQUE BY TIGER

—after May Swenson

May my defiance perish in your jaws, succumb
as in a dream on the grassy nights
you stalk. May I be overcome
by shredding, tender fury,
if I should dare. If I should sleep, please, breathe your bites

along my cassocked shoulders: leave a mark. Your hide
spread its slat-stenciled tapestry
across my face, the bones inside
withheld from any query
by muscles undulating under muscle. See,

my manuscripts are marmalade aflame, my ink
awash, with its gamy mollusk scent.
The claim form that read “Wild beast (extinct),”
denied, despite my penury,
your diamond eye: the way, without consent,

you patterned me. For you, the closets are gorged with kills,
the furniture has gone askew,
and my twenty favored words lie still
along the curve of your worry
teeth. You could splinter them. I want you to.

THE NIGHT CITADEL

Night is a body, an emaciated man
speared in the pelvis, the belly, the neck—
a jackdaw covered in sweat

that spans a jellied hemisphere with wings
tacked down to stars, the stars with names,
to contemplate the threat

of dreams. For the citadel's sexagesimal dome
has crowned its fearsome rooms with ink
so that its minaret

may spire into the asymptotic vault.
The horizon swirls, uncurls its arms
of cloud—of violet—

Until the chamberlain occults the chamber
door to say, *It's time, it's time*
to dress. Then, in freshets,

the revenance pools intestate beside
the bed, the baseboards; and, in the red
streak of a last garnet—

mercifully flung, its zoetrope and all,
aflame into the grit—is seared
to hueless silhouette.