Family Spirits, with Voice of One Child Miscarried

(Thailand)

Come in. Everyone does. This is the house of our name, a tourist destination. Here, the legendary general, father-spawn, travels forever his flame of fluorescents and burning incense. Also we’ve got the World Bank posters for sale, servants humming to pop tunes a-tonal, suffering the street’s traffic blather. We’ve got boas below the driveway. A blue coral in the toilet bowl.

As for the others, the blind- and sunbeam, the pipe- and whip-snake, the dog-eared or dwarf—when someone rattles at a lily’s foot, we listen.

Oh but you can’t be always, you see, in residence, can’t hide behind the fence of your city forever. Why should more souls come down, in sum, in sever, be whomsoever accident makes of skin?
Child, our sleep is your dream
danced open each morning by the girls
selling fruit and rice.
There’s a spank
of hammers on tin, a clank of constant
construction,
sprouting capillary action,
heavy electrical veins.

Born into the trade, for money and motive we love
anyone long time, each of us all together.

To be poured over the stone, for the repose
of flesh and its closed riddles? But not to give,
as if wrong, a stroke of soul, joke that still lives
like a fugitive, spirit thus being broken.

Built by a man in love
with change, this house of our name.
Yesterday the seer, the one with the hole, the mole,
on his face, told us how grandfather comes
back to this place often. He sits in the gold flecked
pagoda, picking beige leaves from the money tree, eating
one apple after another. Planned the fall of a king, ruled this city
by charging for water. In this family we sigh,
if only he’d been corrupt,
we could have been really rich.

Please, give more detail. Things sexual come mostly
unclear. Who’s the host, what’s below wet groundswell?
This taste of salt is a business. Say you sell
the heart on faretheewells. Then best is not to be born.

But also there is kindness. My cousin carries the torch
at our grandfather’s cremation, bowing in uniform, jaw braced above his bright gold buttons, head bent, fingers splayed.

Later he commands all paper flowers thrown into the fire. Here’s yours. Let it go. The smoke alone helps the spirit to rise.

Coming back with ashes in his hands, later he tells us because of the scent of burning body and his love he’ll never eat bread again.


There’s the first canal, birth and the other than.

If unborn, the stain can remain so within,
so wedded to thin shadow it still goes to speak—

Child, I don’t know how else to get at this. Goes the rumor, this life, a space-for-rent, as we own a corner of land that used to be slum, that’s called the place of snakes. As for this being poured into
space, name, body, the era someone oh
so subtly plots you unto, maybe it’s
side winding, maybe it’s serpent. The skin
comes off. Once I stood by a river watching
the skin come off. Membrane of how
we wanted you, which was not enough
to keep you from turning back.
Behind, along the path the snake had come,
dirt, combed loosely,
showing its tracks for a while.