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.

Shadow falls on rock. Aftershock. Refusal.

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.