Noctilucent
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Melissa Buckheit

Shearsman Books
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For Rebecca

and

for Olga
Noctilucent
there’s the desert beyond them that I try to keep housed from
no thin flesh there no coursing fluid no thought
   —Alice Notley

My life
   by water
   Hear—

   —Lorine Niedecker
Noctilucent

In speaking of *kuanós*, cyano

blue, a dark-blue mineral in designations of certain bluish salts and minerals, of cyanide, cyanic

the blueness of skin cyan

the blueness of sky cyan

whose greenish-blue is like water breathed in, supplants air

(my) cyanosis condition in which the skin appears blue from no oxygen in the blood

Blue the blue of painted Greek boats, blue mercury light *alive* with the kindling of moths, shy, shining in the night

little noctilucae not marred in their bioluminescence, night-glow (if bugs)
making marine phosphorescence,

like love

Latin moon-lantern, Japanese moon-

lanterns strung orange

for the night-

walk to a lover’s door preceding electric blue

lights of the city from space

* nights are illuminated by noctilucent clouds, waves, beaches and celestial orbs *

migrations of aquatic plants whose cyan flight is mutable change in light,

dark (the homes) we make glowing in

other bodies

our lovers

asleep (inside us)
Suffering

This isn’t the answer. The answer is my hand on the table, saying what we thought privacy was, on your forehead cupping the temple where the fine hairs begin. What origin begins with hair, the tenderest movement out, ends with bodies lining graves, an inability to pronounce the phonemes of your now foreign language. The language itself, an answer. The woman isn’t answering the phone, the woman isn’t answering anyone. The woman isn’t. The woman is chemically altering from the moment she is ignited. The woman is a girl. My palm across your temple, your eyes which follow me as I remove it.

Tied to a tree isn’t the answer. Tied to the back of a truck isn’t the answer, as it moves over miles, isn’t the cold hospital room, isn’t “you’re not my daughter anymore and you’ll never be my son.” This answer is evolving, this poem isn’t, recall to me the names inscribed on sheets, almost almost. Your palm as it cups my temple, covering the left eye, the language itself. This isn’t a wave as it takes a whole island, then buries the island beneath the island.
Archipelago

Who would hear you? Home is aside the silence. Adored, unadorned. Purple-pink striations as inside a child. Butterfly. Two lips. I am speaking of quartz. Two women cross the damp road, ambling up the street. Both in pants, one coat. Enter into one car. As they close the door, a squirrel loops past, disappearing around the wheel of the tire. Sun becomes visibly brighter, brighter at high altitude like a mirror shown white.
Did it rain — just a few minutes ago. A certain safety in prose satisfies. Even as we speak. Soon the sun comes out again, and later, the solace of gray I remember like childhood, mood so rare even the storm’s yellow leaves will not allow it. They fall, dark.
A solid day without interruption save the parabolic rumble of bus. All four directions. If one thing appears, another may continue it. As a group of islands, if you circle them, eventually you will begin again at a group of islands. The same schema. Always earth changes, moving us, clouds on a continuous chart. Now waves push and shift; one island a bit more north than we could remember. Paros, liquid green mound & dry sands. A group of islands, a chief sea. Pelagic shell adored, unadorned. Of the sea, of the sea. Master. I have. Forgotten. Where were we going?
Let the sun warm you. On a bed in the open light. Late August, but it’s September. Fluvial. Entered by a lavender plant. At the base of a line, intersecting the light and you. Cool air, it’s pleasurable. Please from *pelagós*. Related words, placate— Any jar is an open sea. The broken one meant for transporting water to the home. Bottles, as if I can’t say they are women. The sun goes “in”. *Domus* means “not interference”. The waves at sight.
Datura

A flower not diurnal
  almost poisonous,

vivid in the half-dark
  of opposing particles—

a cushion with the light
  behind it

your silhouette

below my limbs as sleep

breaks away

I call you

to the corner of the room  where the shelf
  of sea begins

  mid-air