

Noctilucent

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Contents

Noctilucent / 11
Suffering / 13
Archipelago / 14
Datura / 18
Epis / 19
Hildegard / 21
Demotics / 22
Post-Modern Epithalamion / 35
Polis / 36
Lotus / 37
As If I Were Conceived in Her Diorama / 39
Like the Sea Is Empty and Full / 43
Nightshade / 44
Inimical to the Trees in this Warm Clime / 46
End of Summer / 47
White Noise / 49
The Future / 57
White Goddess / 58
Snow / 59
Neva / 61
A Concise History of the Female / 62
Bee / 66
Empty Map of Room / 67
Notes / 69
Acknowledgements / 75

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

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