

# *Two Poems*

*Encina Mei Roh*

## Unavailable

Saturday nights a year ago,  
you opened your legs to strangers and their words  
bloodletting to cure your feminine hysteria.

in the dark, you slowly learned that  
there are two types of bruises  
that can be left around your neck.

she tells you that there are echelons to pain  
and empathy necessitates experience,  
so you burn and burn and burn.

but from most angles now,  
you are invisible in the after hours  
of this recreation complex  
and the neon of the exit sign  
ripples in the dark water around you  
like bioluminescent flames.

indole is found in both perfume and coal tar  
and redolence is a matter of scarcity  
so you submerge your body to dissolve your scent.

you are certain there is movement  
in the bottom of the pool where your feet cannot touch  
and there is no one to tell you that you are imagining this.

in the dark,  
your eyes familiarize but will never adjust  
and slowly, the night, too,  
can make blood look like water.

# Purity and Polarity

I

the humming of the refrigerator hollows out  
the space between the last of your words  
that have been absorbed by the bedroom.

unkindly preserved between the mirror and electric currents,  
you are a creature paled and washed down  
by the dense velvet of rain clouds and small traumas.

your last guest is lemon rind,  
bitter and fragrant,  
a thing you cannot stomach  
unless she is diluted with sugar and butter.

you pause before closing the door,  
familiarizing yourself with the equipoise of your own presence again  
and conclude that letting others leave with your loneliness in their purse  
is theft.

a siren wails in the city's distant streets  
(she would wonder whether it is rushing to or from disaster)  
but you mourn all the same.

2

at dusk,

untuck me from your cellar  
and core me with the unripe fruit in your sink.

my skin is maroon wax  
like chrysanthemum petals  
unfurling rhythmically from under  
your copper thumb and the knife.  
half of me is in your hand,

seedless gut exposed,  
as you tell her  
there are leftovers in the fridge for tomorrow.

3

hunger dissolves the butterflies  
in my stomach and my tongue  
curls over the soft wings and waxy bodies  
of their little corpses.  
i chew what has been swallowed.  
i have eaten worse than this.