

Rehearsal in Black

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for Maxine

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Part One

"If I make a word I make myself into a word."

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

Objects as Ourselves

The century's
incandescent. In

syllables of
sand, the

low voice
of history

says *hunger*
artist, boogie

nights, the
boom boom

room's last
good fight.

Tangled on
the ground

like Chinese
lanterns, the

days past
and present;

its face
erased by

words, the
body in

the garden.
Annealed to

bone, brushed
by the

sun, flesh
is architecture,

a white
shadow turning.

Strong as
a god

but sweet
as panic,

the real
is excessive,

its last
bone note

no evidence
of indifference.

I came
here dust

and wound
up distance.

You can
just imagine

the *carne*
asada, mustard

seed fairy,
and *siempre*

*mismo la
ventana amarilla.*

It's just
as death

had imagined,
an endless

sprawl of
appearance in

black stone
glitter. In

an outlandish
suburb, where

the stench
is jasmine,

a nightingale
sings on

what was
once a

rampart. As
the long

rain falls,
the stem's

transparent, also
the object.

Gilded Instruments

At the hour
of unleashing,

local and
baroque,

earthen angels
cry in stone.

The mouth
writes desire

on the body
in question;

a man is
beaten like

the prophet
of the town.

What verbs
are needed

by devastation's
measure, what

silence thick
as pleasure?

The precipice
is a harvest.

In the strictest
of senses, you

are never *you*
but a cloud

quotation in
a borrowed parlor.

The rigor of
matter, like a

black magic feather,
eats at decorum

and natural history,
remains American

as your old
man. At water's

sharp edge, the
fraught world

bends its vines
and senses,

feeling if it can
the nothing

gather. Down
comes the cold.

Comes of itself
a small persistent

longing. In each
pleasure, the

tensions minded
and what are

years for? You
found and secured

nothing your
own. A white

mouth open.
Indecent as

a sculpture
of fur and bone.

Low against
the sun, on

what was once
a lake, crayfish

appeared out
of small hollows.

The temper
of the light,

fine and ashy,
moves you now.

Lights on Bridges

To be temporary
here, to say
the word weakness

to the blinding
chorus or sink
in counter song

is all the
lovely spending, not
the true story

but what might
follow. Landscape
of the hand.

The body's open
secret reticent as
a plan. Admonished

by her lips
folded over snow
within the pink

town. A matter
of giants drawing
deep blanks, like

what the world
knows—river's bed,
wind in trees.

Life is after
all a permanent
condition and then

the nest falls.
In essence and
in sense, rummaging

through your eyes
for outside things:
the temple and

the bell. You
practice this alone,
in the used

light of day,
on a medieval
screen, on the

red wings of
closure, as rain
in Cleveland settles

on the game.
Flesh in its
stiffness feels like

silk. In motion
and in sound,
the way downstairs

and out into
the brilliance. Pinch-
me-not. Insertions

through slits as
day comes on
thickly. We are

what we aren't.
White noise in
rural distance is