

by Jennifer Chang

where I've never been restful,
never still. Outside, the buses must be un-routing.
I hear their slowing screech round the corner,
engines dying. My neighbor's a dinosaur, Bonnie,
she's lived here since the commune days,
eats hempseed, I bet, always nods at me. It's not her
out there, but she's in my head, the lonely field
I imagine each night, awake again
nowhere else to go.

for I knew these trees once
as a different self. I'll never speak
to her again or stand outside
like the trees, attending to what's
limitless, the sky, stray faces
at stray windows.

who makes me stray,
makes me tired of you and you and you, all of you
the never outside my window. Here, I turn
to stone, turn to the body in the dark.
I turn mortal and loathsome as bitumen

blackening out a new roof. I turn
at Florida Avenue, up 16th. I turn like milk,
unforgivably sour. A sudden turncoat,
I'll turn on you. My ideology,
a tourniquet. I turn my face
towards your light, alas, the last of which
will not return to me. I'm turning
off now—

Goodnight, America. Good night, neighbor.

I did not know your art was law, or the you sailed
a boat on the Potomac, could parse the grammar
of daffodils.... Tonight is Sunday; on Friday
you died. Crowding the mail room with you last week,
I wondered whether to note the winter
drag, the government shut down again
by brief-falling snow. Neighbor, I junked
circulars and lost hope. I sighed, let my son cry
too loudly, Bonnie, Bonnie rather than turn to you
to wish you good night, good night....

Dear Bonnie, I wish you goodnight.