

CAT WASHINGTON

The light is pink through the backs of trees
can be pines or larches or pears

kinship terms more familiar than names can be
distancing diminutivizing affirming no longer unfamiliar

power cut no inverter
use the gas make tea

a smell dettol stronger than dettol antiseptic toxic
polished granite compound brown

beyond the trees hills disappear into houses
concrete lain over rebar hand-torqued into convexity

forms a solid gray unbeveled arch from hilltop to roofline to madan
ostensibly maybe probably to keep errant exposed flanks of illegally-mined sand at bay

because beyond the trees within city limits resources are extracted
thin though thin through competition thin like *chats Shillongais*

thin through taking thin through selling thin through use thin alkaline
from our royal blue Maruti 800 we marvel ('I've never seen anything like this')

Belt that looks like it's in inches
measuring the land they wanted to measure right up to the drain

he demanded they measure four feet from the drain and they wouldn't
they measured two feet from the drain

multiply 1300 per sq foot by 150 by something and it
comes to seven crore and something

are you accusing me of making a mistake he said
it's eight

The light is still morning light
thin but full and not paining bright

Cat *Kyntiak*, later disappeared, leaving
jean thread hangings tangling attachment,

the vox-hollow bereft, missing swipes,
is now motionless, intent, springing forward

curling into grass shadowed by reeds
shaded by the backs of trees

Like citrus vapor, the light emulsifies,
micronic droplet flammande

Kyntiak intensifies
muscles tighten dainty

to articulate tip
She begins to open and close

her jaws
rapidly in a clatter

like toy teeth and hers are needles
on a wound spring

and she in a trance flashing the teeth the jaws
opening and closing very rapidly

from the throat an involuntary chatter an eck eck eck
frightening until a short echo sounds

She's imitating also in the grass a small black bird nearly perfectly
as a kind of lure staring intent involuntary

Let out in the afternoon moon
hens

sawdust sticking to their heels
forking

but ignored draw lines in the wet grass pushing up
pyrjong mosquitos

Intimate gossamers but gossamers
require cosseting to be expected to survive

Close the windows it's after 5 it's already two hours
since the mosquitoes left the shallows for the sha—

train the tongue to treat *h* as consonant clustering aspirationally
Th as in *thy*

voiced and voiceless two-character plosive
not melded

but single-wound copper core
damp down mutton bone *thlone*

Cat as cowboy
astride

the white chickens
Th as in *thy*

thick
compound I

we freely
take

Too hot to paint corrugated tin
all last month

Too wet now in back to whitewash
or paint the doors

Entire green islands fleck off into black catchment
Sintex yellow print

tin roof in the rain
too wet to paint

Nature where encroachments and distortions are everywhere
Nuclear minority Romulus and Remus same she produces wastes

Romanized orthography botches epenthetic
lot extension,

pesticidal garden pathology
of another plot,

down the garden path
switching on the pump

Starting construction the field next door accommodates
another giant concrete abode

outdoor tube-lights
fail to explode

Giant golflink Lodge can't get a liquor license
given the objections of the Garo church down the lane

so the Cherokee room, at Rs. 10,000 per night,
remains empty

And this house itself a dacha though in the city
limits this city Salzburg *sma ksem*

where Mozart came and Julie Andrews
fashioned love out of drapes

What is it ringed by mountains like a berserk
Maypole sticking up through the abode of the clouds

Salzburg while down the hill toward the tastefully situated private psychiatric hospital
the rural health mission strops youth in clime

The red light atop the black plastic speakers' subwoofer beats
in waltz time

jaggery candy striper wound round spindle leading down to three men
in basement rooms the *khrum* for clandestine Buds

I think in America you don't see very many ladies in saris
there is no more native dress anywhere I think only India is beautiful

Morse bill of lading
Ezekiel trading

The light is fading
The bed is mading

The heart is beating
bp-bp bp-BP!

Chattering teeth
like polished teak

repeating
reap