

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 golfink 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