Cat Washington

The light is pink through the backs of trees

can be pine or larch or pear

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 can come will be there

Above 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)

motionless intent springing

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

The jaws pink bat-like

begin to open and close

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 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 clustering aspirationally

*Th* as in *thy*

voiced and voiceless

two-character plosive

not melded 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 into Sintex

yellow print black catchment

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