

Poetry by Joe Milford

sepia-toned

i once tried to own an afternoon
like a snowglobe or a watch stopped
handed down from a grandfather
of an ex-girlfriend
the elusive afternoon
always shedding its scales
while clipping its toenails
in the sepia dust raining from the rafters
and the machinery gasping steam
as it crocheted afghans
to be unraveled by other
machinations before the next
afternoon comes in and unbuttons
its waistcoat to spill out a map
of a country of strip-malls and starvation
and the afternoon who did not pay the cable
finds itself whittling at the roots
of oak trees with humid halitosis
and the Ferris wheel crashes through
our houses and no one notices
when it grinds our neighborhoods
into bits and then falls to its side
to make a crop circle which is
the signature of this divine afternoon

Cleopatra

i cut your eyelashes
as you slept
to sew the buttons
on the slave girls'
shirts

blackout

woke with glitter
in my beard.

i must have eaten
a mythic beast.

hipsters

the Ikeans
fashion Oprahtopia
listening to emo while
the neolatariat
makes wooden horses
with an ap

poet self-portrait

an addict
whispering
to a poppy field

mentor

you taught me
levitation
by shooting
the footbridge
out from under me
with your semi-
automatic
wastrel acumen

another communion

your secret to nestle. your secret
to Gatling gun. your secret un-trestled.
its ivies are poisonous. its consistency
Alencon lace. the tables are map-weary.
your secrets to bury and braid or be
made wastelaid. to the archives after
dive after dive after dive. your secret
to baffle as the curtains blown by
armageddon. the maze and its walls
made from ancient keys discarded.
the Arctic fields traversed for the secret
and the blood in your veins coursing
through every cortex and portal.
words as keys to your eyelids unlocking
in the vibrant. never afraid of devastation
only of the road to its ominous kingdoms.
the landscape of the palm of the hand
closing around the handle of the lever
pulsing in place in the sunlit dust

falling upon the bristling hairs and
the act in tumult of the bodies lachrymose
or smoldering in the tossed bed waiting
for the lighthouse of the orgasm
to ferry us silent or at least that what
you said I said in my fever that night.

mythology

Ouija boardroom skyscraper Nephilim
upon your Nazca lines great geometries
23 degrees on the noses of the moai
Icarus flew over laughing, committing
suicide once he realized that all is labyrinth