Nathaniel Mackey

Song of the Andoumboulou: 48

It was a freeway overpass we were on, an overpass east of La Brea. There we stood watching cars pass under us, desert flutes gargling wind at

our

backs, an overpass we stood

on

looking west... What there was wasn't music but music was there. Where it came from was nowhere, we heard it nonetheless, not hearing

it

before put us there... So we

thought

but wrongly thought, wrong to have thought we could. There we stood atop the world looking out at the world. L.A. it now was we

were in...

Inside each car someone bore the world away, each a fleeting guest whose going we lamented, kin we could've sworn we saw... It was a bridge over the river of souls

we were on. Lower than we thought we stood we stood looking, eyes all but shut by glare... It was a river never stepped into less than twice. A river of light, it

was

a river of lies we were told, the biggest we'd outrun river's end... Where we stood was a ledge beneath in-between feet. Elegiac traffic

ran

endlessly away. Our one resort, it

said,

was a lie... A glittering rung it was we took it we stood on, strung light filled with grit lit by sunset, soon to be remembered rush. It was twilight,

the

river was headlights and taillights, flowing both ways at once

lacktriangle

Head of echoic welter. Head I was hit upside. Curlicue accosting my neck, ears bitten by flues, fluted wind, Stra hest... Head I was hit upside, a glancing blow. Whirligig

and woe

more than any one head imagined. Not that I saw much but that a glance was enough, one glimpse all it took... Head I was hit upside. Curlicue wind filled with rasp and chatter, all unquiet, back and to the sides and front I stood on the overpass gazing out as did the rest. A caravan

of

cars, busses, trucks went by below. A congeries of trucks, busses, cars bemoaned Anuncia, her name now

Nunca.

borne away inside each one... Head I was hit upside... Branch I stood held up on... Ledge, putative loquat limb, east of La Brea... Branch I

was

hung up on... The bending of boughs was a blending of eyelessness and light, mending, my head was a host, B'Hest its visitor, lost in desert nearness otherwise won. Blinded by the glint of the sun, her glimpsed

eye-

tooth, the bending a being flutelike,

pitted,

pathic, put upon... Head I was hit upside, late Lone Coast reconnoiter's behest, distance's insinuative

light...

Swept and up to one side, hum inside my head's acceleration, breath blown on transverse flutes the floor I stood on,

steadied

me it seemed or so I dreamt... B'Hest had me sit, sat me down on the sidewalk, sad come to it so

soon

B'Hest had hold of us, no escape. Not moved if not by reread meaning, moved, music now,

we

saw, beside the point... Late awakening, late arrival by hooklight. Late feeling I fell back on. A bit of blood was in the wind, *rugs* burnt

DU

Persian red, ash in the air

again

Wife dead, daughter's father's hand bloody, not to be called husband we saw... Abruptly back from thirty years' distance, glimpsed ember gone out again

on.

Something we saw we didn't see we saw, B'Hest held it, love's late recension

we

saw... Reminiscent autumn, reminiscent fruit. Anuncia's proffered loquat, mouth an hermetic pout, Anuncia's mouth

perfect,

pillow-talk sweet Spark might've been ash that spoke or might've been spooked, a mango seed the size of an open

mouth

in the middle of the street, seed I saw sitting curbside covered with dust and soot,

run

over how many times who could

say...

As if no longer on the overpass now, as if on the freeway, ran from a runaway B'Us but it ran with me, a worm in the beak of the bird in the singer's

throat,

Wemba's birdlilt waver not yet there though it would someday be. Something we heard it all but seemed we saw... Something we'd soon be bereft of, B'Hest held

it

as well, the imprint of crevice and curve the admission of cloth that we wore nothing underneath. The admission of cloth's inexhaustible draw, spark long since dispensed

with

ignited, rough, incendiary husk... A thin

crease cut the wind, a cyst of emptiness, a mouth, a wrinkle

witnessing what it remained to
be
seen. Thin impression of bones the
admission of cloth that we were
bodies underneath, stirring up upon

as

if by salt

Sat elbows-to-knees on the sidewalk, sooted mango seed an opening, mouth a quick wind blew thru, blent

excursus

reading more than one way. Lure had to do with it, lurk had a say as well, eye looked in thru and with as well blacked, glow gone beyond

where

one could see... Blent auspices, mixed emanation. Sirening fonio, helical whir. An underlay seeded, seen, silhouette, outline of legs under Anuncia's

light

dress, light's late carnal display...

Had lain how long, been run over how many times, couldn't say. Lurk had to do with it, Lone Coast reconnoiter, jackknife-splay silhouette a gloved

hand

to the face, caress gone awry, Udhrite

embrace...

Who when loving die came back amended or were killed, not-to-be-called-husband's

hands

in cuffs

Udhrite arrest echoed Udhrite embrace but nothing stopped. The river of souls rolled on and was us and we stood watching. Legs looked at

from

afar stirred up dust... The admission of cloth we were bones underneath went on repeating, see-thru boon, x-ray bounty,

peepshow

sun... Later motes took the place of stars, heads we were hit upside turned inside out, outside farther out... Stood or before

we

knew it were standing, a First and Future Church of the Mango Seed's late birth, stood, suddenly

standing,

nothing stopped