

Eric Mohrman

ANEMONE

or you, perhaps, off  
in Greece, in the rain, ingratiated  
to ruins

pulling at your skin like  
a banana you can't figure  
out you've already  
peeled, bruised

beside the static sea, beneath a  
grainy sky  
breathing sand bedazzled  
with gritty schizophrenia &  
torn hands that  
bleed  
sunburn: the

consequence of  
rummaging through remote

memories

slink from the light, they become  
secrets, they  
thank you for your  
vigil but never your vigilance

beggars in the streets, shadows  
rich with ragged hunger, or

you, lined up  
shirtless against the wall with the other women  
behind the church, staring at the stucco, feeling its  
pricks in your palms while  
kneeling men  
drink  
from spinal  
taps

your gaze hazes—Aegean  
gleam—gleaning  
a biography that aspires to  
credible, cobbling

together a repertoire  
of catacomb mannerisms

the cracks in the walls  
the crumble dust of disrepair around the walls  
the graffiti spit lovingly on the walls  
the patterns of pale streetlamp patchwork gilding the walls  
the grunts & groans & misogyny & moans coming through the walls  
the spilled blood or wine or smashed garnets staining the walls  
the speckles in the mortar forming constellations upon very close inspection of the walls

all  
offer clues  
to the correct & essential  
interpretation of troubled dreams, faint

liaisons  
with men appointed as care-  
givers—they wear crystal robes  
immune to insignia, they  
finger their chest hair like golden  
fleece, their

pants cost far  
more than the  
whores  
who tug them off, or

you: a flicker &  
a fuck

with bloodshot eyes like fig insides, repeatedly  
retracing your circle of footsteps  
in hot white sand  
as it climbs  
up your shins & thighs & cakes  
on thick &

the slum momentum of  
repetition, the  
authority built on  
guilt & rote, the

drunken gulls blotting the overripe  
sky with silhouette spatter, or you, as a

girl, lulled into a false sense of  
secularity

by elders, their shadows rich  
with roundness, who  
ushered youth  
through shadow gates into the  
shadow gardens  
of their shadow mansions

& fog rubs  
itself  
over the ground like  
self-entitled men

taught you the impossibility of  
filling  
an empty glass just  
by tipping it to your lips

wandering insomniac night through dawn  
while rain drips up from puddles & mists  
into steamy  
ejaculation, you smile at  
the conception of  
the sun &  
abort it silently &  
borrow

a bathroom, where you rinse  
the hair off your head, teeth clattering  
onto smirking tiles, you

pluck them up, wobbly, pocket them in lieu of  
currency & leave

but you effortlessly pass for beautiful in the daylight

pausing  
to consider your  
reflection in a  
puddle—a

momentary diptych

moving on, mouthing unspeakable  
obscenities at  
the skeletons  
inhabiting labyrinth alleys, they

give you chills & weep steam  
from sockets &  
whisper  
the meaning of your  
name as  
you  
go  
by