

Someone's clothes are scattered on
the freeway.
Dead raccoon
or possum?
We see whipped cream clouds
highway patrol behind the evergreen
Sing along with the memory of the show
we saw last night
Knowing all the words

beneath this graveyard western sky

The enchanted scent of fast food french fries
swoons
with the smoke from our cigarettes
without a license,
without discretion.
We're skeletons of a beautiful lady
Stuck in Southern Oregon closet
narrow minds hanging round
like coats.

Six (Decades)

Beauty's sweat conjures infallible sin--
Deserts drifting survive natural heat--
Breathe in, breathe out the colors of your skin.

Centuries' tales speak of wars with no wins--
Oceans weeping die in fated defeat--
Beauty's sweat conjures infallible sin.

Conquering heroes find their souls as tin--
Mountains seeking will collapse as they meet--
Breathe in, breathe out the colors of your skin.

Complex memories of interracial kin--
Valleys starving find rebellion to eat--
Beauty's sweat conjures infallible sin.

Cradles of discourse roll and scratch their chins--
Nights sleeping on day's ethereal seat--
Breathe in, breathe out the colors of your skin.

Counting minutes until God lets them in--
Skies dancing the years on their merry feet--
Beauty's sweat conjures infallible sin.
Breathe in, breathe out the colors of your skin.

Dawn in a foreign city

These bunks stack three. Stacks of ten, twenty, I didn't count them all before I fell asleep. I fell hard.

The noise of rain has stirred me in the sleeping bag. The windows are blurry, gray, the early morning darkened by summer clouds. What lies outside is left to my imagination. I remember silent streets, cobblestones, the buildings whispering history.

I consider what I will take away from this place: original sunflowers and pipes on chairs, floating homes in tiny rivers under illuminated bridges, an unfortunate little girl's house, a one-legged pigeon. The only tulips I saw were on a street vendor's post cards.

The temptation to write overcomes my waking body, the ink filling the lines as the rain in the canals. Even though I'm not that sleepy, my eyes droop in the gray light.

My feet are hot and tight in the down bag. The air is cool, despite all the sleeping bodies. Someone snores in a faraway bunk. You can't predict the company in a hostel.

The gray floors and iron legs of the beds, the colorless walls, the piles of backpacks... I try to capture the early hours of this foreign city from inside the rainy windows.

It's like a faucet over the building. If I were able to speak, my words would drown, my thoughts washing away in the 'Dam rain.

A Danish Woman's Chinese Violin

She is a sixty-two year old Danish woman who bought herself a violin made in China on her last birthday. Her recent purchases include a fancier, bigger case, a bow and new strings. She practices at least two hours a day.

Seems she's always had a passion for it.

My mother made me take violin lessons when I was eight, but I hated them. Now she talks about teaching my son when he's old enough. Her two granddaughters both play, and I think, Isn't that enough? I'd rather he learn the cello.

She was married to an accomplished violinist for nine years. When she asked him to teach her, he'd only get so far until she would make a mistake. Then he'd scream at her, say, Stick to knitting.

Last night, we saw a film, *The Red Violin*. She loved the music but had a difficult time following the story. After the violin escapes destruction in China, my mother comments, My violin was made in China.

She doesn't understand who is who or why this or that has happened, but she sees the irony that during the Chinese revolution when all Western culture was outlawed, European instruments were destroyed. Now she plays on a violin made in China.