

[Memento mori]

LESLIE HARRISON

And this is the way it happens a moment
 wakes in plain air and maybe a little rain
 a moment stretches itself out over breakfast
 something a little precious like crumpets with
 exotic jam black tea the moment pulls up
 a chair indolent and at ease the moment slides
 a butter knife off your plate takes it up into
 the gleaming the shine like fire flickering along
 the blade the moment moves its chair closer
 to yours and you have this unbearable desire
 to let some other shoulder carry the weight

of your head of your sad head full of ticking
 insects fates and strangers in their chains
 and you do you lean down lean into the moment
 rest there and the metal meets your heart
 the blade sticky with fruit that hint of sweetness
 the ribs are powerless in their small rising
 in their falling they make a gate unhinged and
 open and there inside the rain inside the day
 the moment vanishes leaving only you leaving
 only the blade



[Imagine]

LESLIE HARRISON

My goals today are modest

attend the sky for signs of falling

signs the buildings remain at ease

comfortable abutments guarding against

so much endless space

their blank faces intentionally broken open in windows

such casual such pretty risk

*

The blind

wear sunglasses

darkness being one thing

exempt from multiplication

objects in mirrors are often

closer than they appear

what follows

does so in ways both intimate and dangerous

movie stars wear shades

windows without history

forgetting the arc lamp of the past forgetting

recognition

was never a matter for such tiny disguises

*

The sky all day

the sky keeps showing off amusing itself

with the usual bag of tricks

the city stands below stands

in shadow somewhere small switches are thrown
and the stars muscle their way into being
 into being seen again
our ancient coming attractions a million years or more
 in the making and in the dying in the dying night
we go out into the lighted dark we go over the details
 we make extensive notes excuses amends
we never needed
 to imagine the past
 but still we do
 ☹

[Wrong]

LESLIE HARRISON

How the ground gives some things back cicadas for instance
how seventeen years of gone years of nowhere here years
of not cicada and now the swarm now frailglass wings and
now mouth and now devour the flowers too tucked sucked
back down confined in their own pockets their purses of
save and wait wait all summer fall all winter and then again
they come somehow different somehow exactly the same
how worms curl nest and feast in fallen whalebone how not
one of them becomes the whale lost in the pressured dark
how the mouth of the river dies in the mouth of the ocean
this sad equation of water unequal to water how the swan's
obscene neck curls in the muck like a question the world
keeps refusing to answer or always answers wrong

