

Lorna Perez

## Late Night

miles stretched out like longing  
as though it could so easily be held out  
in these fading hours  
as though a voice across distance  
can conjure all our past tenses

is it enough to make you open--  
blossom like an invitation or promise--  
past these hastily stacked almos  
into another here;

something more and less than now  
pushing back,  
arched against the dawn,  
its close enough

## **Almost Autumn**

Again, the night comes, heavy against the neon  
and all of these predictable certainties  
like wine uncorked, a book of new poems  
and the hope that there is something  
out there in the night waiting to become  
you are unprepared again,  
for the loneliness of the impending season  
as the late light filters through trees, mild and deceptive,  
you think there is time yet.

yet.

we will always want just a bit more  
another long evening  
another morning delayed,  
another arrival  
and find ourselves instead  
in the empty moment, delaying nothing  
save the falling.

## **The Far Flung (an immigration poem)**

Emerging, world-weary and blinking at  
harsh and angular light,  
relieved for fresh air, though it  
lacerates the lungs

and I think of life on other landscapes  
and wonder if geography can  
be grafted into us—  
these lands we've wandered  
folded in our marrow  
strung in our DNA like ship-rigging

immigrants to arrive far flung  
out of history and situated by it  
because we can never outrun  
famine or ancestors under feudal skies  
can't outrun dictatorship or colonies  
or centuries of leaving to

arrive under brittle skies  
these desperate generations of raging  
just under the skin

## **Just Like a Woman**

I think of nights passed like this one  
Held trembling before the inevitability of discontent,  
Broken open like so many moments  
Never arrived at

And now, years later in some hotel bar  
In some city that belongs to neither of us wholly  
We introduce one another as friends  
An ill-fitting nomenclature  
That doesn't begin to hint at the ache behind the words

I've raged through crisp autumn days  
Stealing tenderness past grieving  
And believed, finally, in the indisputable  
Ability of time to gnaw away the edge

Like all clichés, this too ruptures