

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