

## Evelyn Lau / THREE POEMS

### CONCLUSION

She likes it cold here —  
her hands, scorched by his heat,  
dance backwards to safety.  
Shot by arrows of exhaustion,  
his eyes pulse blue hearts, his temples  
swell into tenderness,  
but she seeks no refuge in soft spots,  
trains instead on the cutting edges.

She remembers now the why:  
the years have knit the nerves in her shoulders  
high into her neck,  
snapped muscles locked and secret.  
Voices like warm taffy  
trussed her in ropes of platitudes  
while armies waited to spring unsheathed,  
eyes crossed in disdain.  
The hungry ones wait still  
for her moment of ripeness —  
they will sate their appetites  
on her moment of quick weakening.

His fingers spread smooth tendrils across her skin.  
Furrows cemented between her eyes,  
she stacks the barriers between them  
— such a small space to fill —  
plucks his hairs from the mattress,  
draws bitterness tight around her body.  
She stands him outside, and his brave smile  
shrivels in the winter frost.

## I AM SURE THIS IS

better in the long run  
this mixture of white wine and bile in the bathroom sink  
like something marinated in a musty fridge  
you haven't gotten old enough nor rich enough in the past year  
for someone like me to want you  
muscles and tight jeans notwithstanding  
that familiar hurt look and all the while I'm thinking  
of someone else, clean businessman hands  
another touch, you could say it was like death  
peculiar but awesome  
I followed its patchouli scent

drunk now as a forgotten poet in a once-popular bar  
eager to sell or sacrifice any part of himself  
for that starry career  
scotches and slowly sipped tomato beers  
those desperate kisses at the bus station  
his begging mouth open in front of passersby  
I remember simply an evening where it rained  
after he left, I wore high heels and it seemed  
I had miles to walk alone  
downhill

I'm willing to go anywhere but here  
someplace sandy, with highways and many cars  
I shall wear durable clothing  
seems like everybody went places except me  
I envy their motion, their initiative  
their willingness to give up the struggle and start new  
someplace cleansed of old miseries

shamefully remembered bodies  
for now my eyes are so heavy  
I blame it on the wind that blew up from the beach  
blew the shoreline into my eyes  
I pump bravely at tears but none arrive  
not even four a.m. where no one hears them

you never cried either, at least not in my company  
I wanted to see you broken  
wanted it to be me who'd worked you over  
till everything crashed inside you  
like one prolonged orgasm  
your adventurous hands do nothing for me  
I've experienced the skill of numerous tongues  
all the orifices partaken of  
I've nothing special here to give you  
nothing that can't be bought, and  
most men could outbid you any day

certainly you have no success, just a pair of hands and needle marks  
in your arms  
a grinding crotch and those punk boots  
I've made it so far without needing that  
lived through the losses of others  
the fights and then their moves to different cities  
I assure you  
there's no bridging ground  
maybe we'll meet and have coffee someday  
for now, I am sure this is best

## FREEBASING

fingers urgent against the window. three a.m.

you fall indoors  
a bubble clutched in shivering hands.  
wind sweeps you into lamplight; a carpet  
floats you towards kitchen chair.

fingers frantic  
you seduce mad light into this contraption:  
bottle and pipe  
starred with white grains like fleas  
hopping away from skeletal hands

your eyes gouged, sleepless  
the pipe wobbles on your palm  
like breast of bird fluttering in hand  
milk-pale  
cocaine crystals blooming in a glass globe

flame shoots into pipe  
smoke swirls inside the bottle  
a chemical smell here —  
your mouth gasps for this strange bird  
sucks and swallows

black figure blazes

the bottle clears  
a trace of smoke escapes bleached lips  
your grin wraps rubbery  
around the splintering room