

ELENI SIKELIANOS / Three Poems

Bird & Meat Subject

My little bird & meat subject
little human eye unhinging like a door
I'm addressing you & you are the title
my little bird-&-meat

The skin slips off by a strange arrangement

like a boat that begins to take water
before the storm —
the words
in my throats

once sure as cream

spinning the human voice
around the atom, cracks it

my little bird-&-meat
(holds out her hand, bends her fingers), say hello
to this time-eating spider

**Finally, the Shadow (shwt)
(inside the hem)**

world the black — world the blank
— margin

there is no —
no place —
no place where the —
the dead animals
hover
here
in this fringe
that is
earth

lost time collects in the creases

bone-crushed
dust off a minute
dust it off! mantel of time!

we arrive & there's a corpse of an hour, what
happened here?

■

say: by my heart's wish I constructed a city —

at the foot of Mt. Muzri
in the countryside surrounding Nineveh —
and gave its name as Dur-Sharrukin

(had a double who did my work for me, mowed the lawn, did the dishes, little clay figure; lost it, lost my *shedu* in the river)

And in the Upper Paleolithic, we found ourselves
wild onager, red deer, sheep, goat, fox, gazelle, pig, cow, bird, clam, crab,
tortoise and snail. We ate them all.

Ate chrysanthemums, ate nasturtiums, every blossom, grass, anther and nut

Flower how hun-
gry you make me swim swim
to the river in asthmatic
sunlight collect wild seeds there

By the river, the corpse of an hour, it asks us: what happened here

■

say: we saw history
the rocks and grasses sang themselves into houses
rubble turned to hut
we wandered *the ruthless, splendid labyrinths* laid out in gold,
blue and green: tangles of trees, water, animal, weather, and sand

Married the river, married the rock, gold dug out was the dowry
and soon the hem of a train, steam-trail rising like wedding-dress dust

Built roads, built bridges, little plastic dolls with eyes that open and shut,
seeded clouds and nanocrystals and turned the heavens; made

infrared imaging capabilities on CRYSTAL reconnaissance satellites
made the Military Black World

Soon so many persons made so many person-things
till it seemed all that was left of the world was human

How quickly sound travels through these acidified oceans!
How quickly we folded spring into summer!
Constructed bio-available time!

Ate the quail, woodcock, the turtle, fattened liver, the veal calf

our tongues decaying
one by one
near the teeth by my heart's
orifact, Mercury mouth
Walk away

■

Like atmospheric lace
dust-dress of the world never settles And inside the hem
winter steals a mouse

Forkhead Box P2 (aka FOXP2)

what haunts the brain: a cell spell

what plush molecules in a cell spell
thought over the coast of Labrador?

what my mother learned is in my mind
like a sheet of glass

who go generate a bird's consciousness
who, bees?
who be here sliding on the sheet
of the brain my
brainsheet

who shattering some empathic future

who slice some cerebral cortex firing in neuropathic pain

who driving Our Lady of the Highways, Susquehanna

The oldest ice on earth has spoken to me
in a brittle, breaking accent

It spoke

the long sad light on the Harlem River
What are these
countries of humans humming What
are they doing here

dancing on the bridge?

The spirit guides of the subterranean parking lot groan —

the self of itself

shine/s in shine s/in