

Carole Chambers / TWO POEMS

STILL LIFE

UNDER THE OCCUPATION

like the cat leaves
your gifts are partly eaten
showing what cost was in the giving

your sense of grievance is long and cold
carried from another tribe and other hills

no debt is ever paid in this ritual
except one
except the same one
the broker of silence wears a grinning head

your bitter courtship is marked
like ordinary barter
and here we draw closest
to discourse on necessity
but to be loved by you
to be taken in your body through the skin
is something beyond your means

I have recourse to the ways of slaves and women
and cultivate a surface still enough
for reflection

GUNSIGHT

the things we do while sleeping
once were daylight acts
performed with such unthinking grace
that while seen by the police
we escaped their gentle attentions

it is not a matter of age
that gives and takes this vision
unless age just means weariness
and the young will always break the windows
while the old men pray within

any more than we must die
to get what is meant by heaven & hell
& must die again to remember it