

a 2412 chapbook / N°3

Ode to the
Far Shore

Khaty Xiong



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Aubade

Just a drop ago
& we could sow
 plenty then
& in no such luck

 Lucida at work
in all this darkness
—I mean plainly
 which part
does the sun love
anymore?

 We are each so
thick we fall straight
through the era
 recalling as we do
the scent of our mothers
—our meat safe
then aglow
& just
 as ugly

Circadian

Halves of people filing after my surface
 ashen bursting
 my blood in season for the bright mosquito

Emerging from my ear the lone silverfish / master of darkness
 sage of sounds mirroring water
 drowning at best

Gone then a civilization & in a hurry
our kind unmet with mines to blast a lifetime

As in the last of corridors where we live untreated
for the crime of giving in to too much medicine

Love we say & so watch from a distance / be done for those in dormant

The bowl I make with these hands / meals of nori days
 like the tap of a spoon

Currency

My god my dear ghoul will you not front me?
The oaks are budding now—I am new here
I have no secrets

Spring is the freshest muscle—so cue all movement!
Another warning then to make clear
the passing killdeer & powers of the like

Come down from clouds—come alive & lesser in form
Come back in skin & send all your tremors!

I have killed for you

In the wake of faunal dreams squirrels collect for their nests—
your name softening in my arms
as they grow full of your late bones

& the moon is the first of many guests

O sparer of this body I have seen it before—
your crown swelling in song pinned & tender
Behold yourself

& let us kneel together

May we bury as we must as you reign in Blue-eyed Marys—

May we command in sickness
the lone will
to give fright

Notes

mass as it was
 a tickle in the water—
four cardinals
landing
 the seeded floor

 in all directions
 hearts of acrobat
mourning doves
 sastrugi
above the bill

Permission

To be courted
in the realm of sunlight

a mantis' egg sac
lulling on my front door

As if my father's
words have come true

the aphids emerge
from my childhood

To be a limb in service
of another limb

As in how many
prayers to conceive

a strand of my mother's hair?
To piece back her finger?

As if by law I must
love the priestess

tending to my garden
molts of another

Born to Hmong refugees from Laos, Khaty Xiong is the author of debut collection *Poor Anima* (Apogee Press, 2015), which is the first full-length collection of poetry published by a Hmong American woman in the United States. Xiong's work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Verse Daily*, *Poetry Society of America* and elsewhere.

More of her work can be found at khatyxiong.com.

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