

Ode for Starbucks Strangers

Man makes loving eyes at his salad
and in another life beside him
an Asian couple is leaning sideways like carp
one against another in double trench coats her
blue bow flats with just enough pointiness
the occasional exclamation from the white
woman and her powder face pointing
to the gleaming teeth candied in her mouth
and her lover in his North Face fleece
is gazing at her like a violin their twin black
coffees so black that white must tip
the tops and it is not strange at all to have mothers
named Mary and to be figures standing against a wall
in denial of the painting it is not strange
at all to be a river flowing into its own mouth
it is not strange to be given into the ruddiness
that belongs to flannels and red blushed
faces coming in from rain as though it were winter
in this other life I also wear brown blazer jackets
with patches at the elbows I also love with my tongue
open and curled I also touch like a mink I also wait
under yellowed light for the bathroom I withhold
unwavering glances which are strung together
like beads on that girl's dark and glossy nape still as water
I am buzzed and roiled by what my own stomach
does to me I too gurgle my sadnesses around like tapioca
pearls in my mouth I am astonished to be turned sober
by coffee and you alone make me think how
in times of stresses the body says exactly what
it means it comes out like warm trains
of smoke and listen they are closer to the core
and more sweet than you would believe

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