

Hearts of Palm

Afternoon, desultory in the aisles
the way one moves distracted in a dream
I spy her sculpted in the white-green light,
a tiny woman in a camel coat, the years worn off it
here and there. Gloved hand outstretched
to roam among the wares
of this attenuated aisle of imports
where not much from anywhere's filtered in.
Tea? I think as wool-clad fingers flit,
a pale five-winged moth over blackcurrant jam;
a picnic's conjured by the lemon biscuits
until she alights on hearts of palm. A dust-
furred tin. Who knows what possible dinners
she dreams up, or what is caught in some synaptic clasp,
those night-long dinner parties of the past,
seeing the guests off down ice-slick roads
and lying there in the snowplow-thickened night,
a blue light beating through bare trees
and all the ambient noises of the night
astir in her, birds of wakefulness.
Did she value his body most at times like this
when lost in sculpted sleep he seemed more whole
in his nakedness, more than himself?
Her fingers nesting on his chest,
his captured heart beating through her palm.