

Year of the Bird

Martine Bellen

On the seventh day of the seventh month, Golden Bird Chinese Food opens its doors
to hungry ghosts and savages

Her private take-out
—Fried canary for all! And Karaoke. Suet, too.

Trail of her traveling song, her Chinese song, sea song. Swallow
swoops down throat, through winding ear. Conch interiors. She answers herself.
She, herself, is an answer.

A string of guard-light pearly birds with indigo eyes
That wisp through tunnel wind, tumble through ocean's tubes
Tubas, tubas hold forth &
رئ اطلارسن The flying Star
ظفاح ادخ The ill-fated Lovers
Dark permeates heaven
Within the moment's sill
Before ocean and sky co-mingle . . .

No two ways about it
Enlightenment—one way traffic

If waters dry up, wind will drape currents across a shore

If sun freezes, moon will torch the sky
A lemon popsicle

No two ways

One
Bird by two—heart diamond
Diadem

On every seventh day of each seventh month, Golden Bird Chinese Food offers
specials!

Doubt & Belief in take-out pints (furry white rice)—one sweet
/ one sour—sunset orange/sunrise pink with sticky duck sauce (vegan)
Served banquet-style on Lazy-Susans

If she can't read the time on the wall
Does it follow that she can't see the face of the clock?
Does it follow that she's lost in a moment?

Ordering specials, flying
Through dinner: pigeon and 1000-year-old-egg;
A passenger *through* day.

In the year of the bird, pandas pray to Buddha under eclipsed moon
And she, who maps interior territory, mopes, balances greed, mixes
Ingredients—studies how place travels like character—sadness swells the belly;

Now she's a structure you can't move into like a restaurant,
Not something subjective/salty Not a mood to be summarized

Commentary

Our impulse to believe in magic (poetry) reflects our disappointment in god who
doesn't satisfy. That which is outside faith, we're impotent to express. (. . . if god
and poetry are unable to survive in such terrain . . .) How do we describe a surface
covered in god? And *through* that surface? Words are film on the surface of deep
water. Their meaning, the film's narrative. An oily rainbow floating atop as though
one is looking through fog, at fog. (There must be a *through*, though how is it
described? Perhaps *through* music?

A tunnel?

Through scripture?

Through love?

*that which sets the human body in motion. Aerodynamics. Free
as a word*

The body of chains, of chimes. How many directions might time move while one is dying (how many directions must time move, *must time move*)—(even as we grow / even as we shrink). Even as we make love our bodies die (even as we conceive). The patient on the gurney is dying at the same rate as the surgeon who is performing the operation. If you ask her, while she's waiting for food (Doubt & Belief) in the Golden Bird Chinese Restaurant, she'll look at the clock perched on the wall (though cannot read the time): flocks of birds circling sky: Apus, Aquila, Columba, Corvus, Grus, Pavo, Tucana—bird constellations: light of birds, the dream of birds, a bird's afterimage. Visual space does not move apropos the flying body. Why is it called passing?