WHO THE MUSIC INVITES, WHERE IT TAKES THEM

Eachan Holloway

It just was. A jay did thrash
like a tassel of blue
carbon paper on a hammock
between two doors
of the bedroom. It was
at night. The jay tore
off its feathers, down
to the red dust within the chest,
to the song detonating
in the air. It was as if
the chair was bending.

The chair, the house,
the window, the neck
were bending. Red
song, o. Began right
here. Began like the drone
of teeth on bones
scraped clean. Began
and finished. My ear
was breaking. Who
could hear. The two doors
opened. One revealed
old cyclamen rising
in a field, teaching two
lovers to dance. The other
opened to a beach

littered with prismatic
stones, like lion's eyes
still retrieving light.

It finished while
beginning.
The bow snapped
on the strings,
the bow touched
down, the strings
shone with sound.

It finished. My red
mouth, my torn eye,
torn body, the torn
finger, all torn
were no longer torn,
but coming alive.
Like a ragged
orchid unfolding within
a glass bulb, and the bulb
shattering, and the torn
not torn, and lying
there, leaning there,
against the wall,
against the door.
My torn spine filled
with wings, was carried
into a field, was
borne where young coyotes
licked infant faces
as if smoothing corners
on marble and quartz.
It began, it began
where the fire began,
fire is music's weather.
It began in the city
for a few hours. Even I
was carried—to a field,
and all my wounds
closed. I was watching
the cyclamen, they
were wrapping my parents
for the end of history.

The infants did not cry;
but I could hear the closing
of their eyes, I could hear
the static of their tangled
hair, I could hear the limping
dog in the distance, blind,
and drunk. The leaves
were on fire there.
All my wounds did
not close. The instrument
did not stop, the trees
were on fire. The leaves
brightened and hissed
like inflamed
photographs of jewels.

One door opened
and the cyclamen rose.
There were two
of them, lovers, they
were ashen, unsmiling.
No one had ever loved them.
I wished for them to sleep
in barbed wire, I wished
for the half of a face, nearly
as beautiful, that dissolves
in the cupped water
of a drunk's hands.

The music lured
the water over the stones
and the eyes closed
and the beach slept.

There were two
of them. The red
song had torn away
their flesh, had torn
away their bones.
I never exactly *saw* them.
I saw the body the song
made, when the song
ended and then
began. I saw the body
enter here, a hermaphrodite,

and cock its head
and grip its neck.
So furious.
As if it could have turned
to see me. It was the face
cupped in a drunk's hands,
and the face
cupped in a queen's.
And it did not see me.
And the music slowed,
and it turned, the door
closing behind, and
the music ended.
Left me with a beach
beneath crennolated water
as silently, unseen,
cyclamen danced alone.