

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.