Hillside Fish Market

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Last night the market burned. The windows black and ugly hold no magic fish. I'd seen a buffalo nudge the glass and turn her back to me. Brown scales as big as quarters gleam through water gold as pee. I watch him crack the spines of fish. Like polished shoes the sheen of heads surrounds the butcher's feet. She rolls and air-pearls leave the tank like silver souls.

In August ponds are smooth as oil. A frog is polished, emerald jade. Old mountains steam in clouds. Still waters mirror heaven's fog between the lily pads. A China dream is cracked as backs of fish move quick and jog through rubbery stems. The lilies tip their cream and yellow flowers. Kim Lee's line goes tight and slits the leaves; a nose is dragged to light.

The night the Hillside Market burned, I slept and dreamed of fish. I watched them weave between my friskly legs and nibble bubbles kept in hairs. A tender fleshy mouth, a clean and gentle “O” withdrew my pearls. I slept while buildings burned. A blackened cough, a mean and ugly vomit licked the fish. They died in splintered glass with chair legs black and dried.