

T H E L A S T P A G E



M O L L Y M c Q U A D E

Paper was marbled in Japan at least as early as the beginning of the twelfth century and probably a good deal earlier, at which time, apparently, the marbling occupied only part of the sheet, the remainder being used for writing poetry.

– Anne Chambers

The marbleized and dewlapped cellular stream
concludes the volume
by raising a lone black eye
on the last page, like seed of pear
propped sexual and atilt in a ransacked cloister:
the voluptuary pinpoint prophet floats
in a scarlet paper cowl of mastery,
waves of spiral calm that might comfort
a workaholic harbor's sky in striving Europe,
could tantalize the reader's secular touch
in a swerving prayer of Persian arabesque
and the signature of who wants what,
the sedulous.
An unguent fleck,
I'm asprawl
in this languid ballroom of the tangerine gout
and octopus brotherhoods.
Fatigued of words,
spectral umpteenth reader,
you watch.
The squat blue tentacled star
fills itself with fleecy lips
and skates across a bookish oceanarium
of he-man speckled catfish
sneezing in the mauve undersea scrawl –

rapture of the glitzy curl
written and bled,
circa 1794. Always hue's inhabitant,
I suck and take the least light
like a prima donna who can do vrithout without
because the Noh costume of her spirit
flaps svelte just beyond the forbidden lacquer hinge.
You shouldn't call it sacred.
I am no Egyptian dominatrix, wizened,
on the rebound –
I have found soft consolation all these months,
tended eulalia, valerian
(two of the Seven Pillars of Autumn),
having stitched them into
the sateen quilt of my back,
and I have trained my woolly dreams upon
a cloud-shaped pillow
with peony stoneware sgraffitto affixed
for my woozy nape of iron.
Lobed too much, always on a diet,
a wannabe ogling the Buddha and his assembly,
I have kept myself content most days
by burping the next Shah-to-be,
a baby chimera alert by my tomb.
The grammar of ornament
may yet redeem me:
elegant beard, jewelry elaborate,
fringed cape, brave limestone,
et cetera – plus, he's
“affectionate.”
Even the winged beetle is a symbol of the sun
reborn each day entirely
with the small, wry burst
of a cherished, thudding
apricot.