

Byzantium in a Pot

*Even language grew too young to follow / nights alone in the
tiny rented room / with the Polestar at the window too huge
too white*

—Anne Winters, “Alternate Lives”

We stewed two Cornish game hens, one for you and one for me, in two pots
with andouille sausage and thyme, sage and cippolini mushrooms,
pearl onions and baby carrots, bone broth and a little bit of port,
sea salt and cracked pepper.

Oh my god, my Furiant Molto Espresso,
my Revolutionary Etude, my Io, this is no mere food.
This is a seduction.

Its scent filled the room, complicated as a thicket, with flowers and bitter
berries and foxy dung beneath. An aroma of such density as to distort space
with spore-borne fungal damp, aromatic mist-globules sprayed from trodden
beechmast, hazy reek of grass fires beyond the horizon.

Unimaginable floods of photons poured forth unseen by distant suns.
This is what mattered.
The rest of the world was allegory. But you knew that.

Last night I dreamt that an eagle flew into our bedroom through the open
window and landed first on my hand, then on yours, flew off, and then returned.
The eagle spoke to us, and I remember thinking inside my dream
how remarkable that was, and how one of us must remember what the eagle said,
but I cannot remember what the eagle said, and neither can you.

What’s the good of a language you cannot remember? Signifier
and signified in a head-on collision.
Like witnessing the birth of poetry.

We woke to rain and an absence of sky.
Even the moon refused to show her face.

It's true that from time-to-time the darkness stumbles over the light,
as it is said somewhere in the Book for which there is no Talmudic concordat
because everything worthy is said in King Solomon’s Kohalet.

All we owe to the world is our transubstantiated state of hapax legomenon.
By which I mean, that which you think reality is, is shadow stumbling over itself.

Give me light. Give me light.

Light, and an eye focused on its own center, absorbing star-
dazzle into its retinal blackness from which dreams of eagles
sing in coded libretti.

Dream me into being, dreams that take on the life of cantos filled
with ravenous eagles. See mine leaning westward, where some evenings,
at sunset,

the mountains turn gold all the way to the horizon
and eagles in their aeries offer commentaries on the parsha for the eve
of the newborn world.