

SHARON DOUBIAGO

Reading Simic over the Atlantic

He prefers Sappho's insomnia
the small pools of light her fragments throw
over the ordinary things around her

to Homer's large sense of history
as sacred myth

I once had a love
who wanted to kill me
for my aesthetics

whose tastes I became
to keep our love alive

He instructs on the profound anonymity
we all have inside us, his poem
"in a room where we are absent"

you
sleeping beside me
in your anointed anonymity

Sappho and me in insomnia
over the big burning fragment
of the surviving world

Poet Falling to the Earth

There's a place I fall to.
Huaca. Water above.
A place
I fall through
a hole in the sky, a wave
I come in on
to find you. I always return
believing I will

You approach from behind. What do you do?
I write poetry. I deliver bread
from Phoenix to the North End.
I'd get a D in poetry.

Me too. I don't know what I'm writing. I'm just trying
to let it come, mana from heaven and follow it, Jerusalem's
golden thread. I come here to dance
on the native graves, that energy hump
under the tile there, do you feel them? this hotel built
on their burial site. This morning

I woke to Neruda's *Poeses*. Now I can't remember
a syllable. A meaning. I just know
what the stars say. Their rhythm. That's why I left
my mother's car home tonight, did not walk
to Thrifty's for lipstick. When I walk back
I'll walk toward California, Jupiter east of Sagittarius now.
I know why I never did my children's horoscopes. Huaca, I know
where we are right now.

I tried to read Yeats' *Vision*, the breadman says.
Did you know, I offer, it came on his honeymoon, the train
to Hollywood? West through San Bernardino, beneath
and along the San Gabriels.
It's the light there, Lucifer
falling from the sky in search of Love. This morning

I opened my eyes beneath my mother's floor
to the butterfly caught in the web.
I was the white flesh-filled spider
darting for it, Neruda
dreaming my loves up the long Klamath,
The Yurok, The Karok, The Hupa

climbing so hard the coastal staircase, walking
their mounts across the thin turtle bridge
when they reach me they fall on me, Fault
of the world we make.

(for Gordon Black)

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Huaca is a Quechua Peruvian word meaning Holy Place or Holy Omen.