

Taelor Skinner

Early Morning Flight from Houston

We are wading through an opal,
quivering in this otherworld where
clouds burn as languid, itinerant fires
afloat on rushing rills of air.
We cast a shadow on the ocean below us,
black-blue as sapphire, textured like an orange peel.
Tinsel currents gallop along the coast.
We follow their tracks inland and alight on the runway
as delicately as a dragonfly
on still water.

Zoë Eisenberg

To My Husband, the One I Have Not Met

To my husband, the one I have not met,
Please stay only in dreams at night.
I find that I'm not thirsty for you yet.
I'm not ready for hand in hand, toes in sand, dressed in white.
Grant your first favor, stay where you are,
Fluffing your feathers and rehearsing your scripts,
Collecting studies, other women, battle scars.
I still want to wake with strange tastes on my lips.
I still want to drink cheap wine, feel the cool of the earth,
To trail gasoline to burn in my wake,
To know laughter, know trembling, know hurt
To be my body's keeper, to be free to mistake.
To my husband, please stand still.
I have a few more inches to grow, I need more time to plant.
I need more time to sleep alone, I need more time to rant.

Ben Blanks

Mask: A Jazz Musician

I do not want what I have got. It's ... it's not that I do not know
where to go in this town, nor where the deep jazz is dripping
down, nor where to rest easy. It's not that I can't carry those deep,
duressing blues, nor carry round those smoky tunes deep down all
the living night. It's not right, I know. The people drink, they go
dancing, smoking in the dark. And they need me to throw the
music down like melted ice. To them, I am the cooling night of
this town. I must drip down that deep, God-forgiving jazz; for
each night, I am their drink-easy savior, their Christ in a house
of beating bricks.