

**JUSTINE EL-KHAZEN**

**Another poem taped to a lamp post**

*AM commute*

Quarter to nine and the air is circulating  
with stories, handheld cameras reel,

the idea of a bomb reddening the inside  
of one building then another,

egress twists white into an empty sky.

Next a stem of breath chalked with remainders,  
filaments of lightbulbs littering the air

and other headlines scrolled from space.

There are scenes, and there are scenes  
of bodies creating themselves  
of dust that play and re-  
play (suspension of an image).

We read ourselves

into the action of everything falling,

the mouth an open switchblade,  
sound stitched to a tremor of surfaces, chirp of machines  
going crazy and "a blip  
without additional information."

The digital eye of every clock upon wreckage and rising dust,  
each number illuminated against the next,

the eighth minute eighth hour:

first, it was a summer of bodies opened by mouths, sun calibrated  
to the distance between forefinger and thumb,

clockwork of lines trailing a lilt of limbs  
and then the mind, the mind

a chain link of Xs.

■

*Identifiable remains*

Long legs in the sand of  
somewhere else,  
a still frame.

The body will always be running  
in the dream of its own dismemberment,  
always in flight.

This is the picture (of the torso,

the hands,  
the face)  
of someone falling

out of time.

■

*Oral history*

Long curlicues of talk annotate the portions of a city  
bracketed by alarm,

the mind a thin history of misnomers:  
here, in the interim, it is spring, summer—

now a globe of filtered light,  
a chronicle of minor adjustments,

signals that splay the spired star tips of nerves electrified  
and documentation

of the blank page.



The mind cycles through its list of antonyms,  
filaments of lightbulbs flare in the afternoon,

then the bitmap of an image forming:

it's always snowing in the mind,  
each of us in the ashen image of the other,  
and the snow can burn  
(harvested letters, records, data).

Birds mass in their departure (a word may be shaped like a bird).

There's a cue,  
the tree empties.

■

*On a clear day*

The communion was something you could taste:  
every mouth closed  
and coated,  
wet membrane, hollow

pressure of a tongue held  
is a form of punctuation,  
a knot  
that can never be undone.

■

*In April*

Eighty-eight searchlights.

Headstone of a sky  
written into the next frame

and every night peeling columns from a low ceiling of moisture.  
Halogen, a short history  
of hauntings.

It seemed possible to remember,  
to profess faith in the subatomic magnification  
of energy,

but there was only a window of diffuse and colorless light,  
mottling the insides of clouds.

Prayers,  
advertised. The nights,  
a controlled experiment in mourning.

Then,  
the crystalline precision of sound netting us,  
cornu spirals interlocking forever,  
greased bar of a straight line, horizons layered like cities,

a vinculum over every number.