

Evening's Chair

Wendy Wood

As for this sea, no one can swim in it.
The beach is lost forever in the glass.
Though these words point tirelessly to your absence,
They are not a name shouted at the sky.
Because the Kobe widower cannot mend the ground,
He screams his wife's name to the sea.
At night, speaking to the glass of his perpetual bride,
He is not insane. For him, the window was torn in half.

As for me, I live in a modern city.
My ceiling is a sky blue umbrella.
My walls are newspaper and squares of light.
I am arranged like flowers in a still life.
Fingering the box of living, I gaze at a glass eye,
But I am asked no question. I string mirrors
Like Christmas lights around my objects,
Trapping the flitting seconds of my face.
On the floor, I force long sentences into picture frames.

I peer behind a lace curtain of cloud.
On the street, vague figures drop their hats,
Vanish into invisible buildings of glass and rain.
Men bring me paper cones of flickering things
Stained to look like long red roses,
But are black and crystalline by morning.
I wrap the smoke tighter around my weary body.
I am sorry, I have no reliable description for loss.
When I am sad, I fold myself up and put her neatly to bed.

Yet we are very loud about our feelings.
The man down the hall often sings like a suburban parakeet.
The woman upstairs fills a juice glass with tears.
I want to be very clear, but *agony* is the one whose sleeves
Are soiled, and her child is also very dirty; it's a word we feel
Is too helpless. *Tragedy* has too many cups; it sounds unreal.
As for *love*, I have heard that word, but I can't be more specific.
When I gave him my name, you see, he often said, Celeste.
It is like that here.

The Kobe widower cannot mend the ground.
The beach is lost forever in the glass.
As for this sea, no one can swim in it.
Though these words point tirelessly to your absence,
They are not a name shouted at the sky.
An empty chair faces the night.
How I long to fold my umbrella
And howl at the stars
Until I no longer know why.

