

By Suji Kwock Kim

If the angle of an eye is all,
the slant of hope, the slant of dreaming, according to each life,
what is the light of this city,
light of Lady Liberty, possessor of the most famous armpit in the world,
light of the lovers on Chinese soap operas, throwing BBQ'd ducks at each other
with that live-it-up-while-you're-young, Woo Me kind
of love,
light of the old men sitting on crates outside geegaw shops
selling dried seahorses & plastic Temples of Heaven,
light of the Ying 'n' Yang Junk Palace,
light of the Golden Phoenix Hair Salon, light of Wig-o-ramas,
light of the suntanners in Central Park turning over like rotisserie chickens sizzling on a
spit,
light of the Pluck U & Gone with the Wings fried-chicken shops,
the parking-meter-leaners, the Glamazons,
the oglers wearing fern-wilting quantities of cologne, strutting, trash-talking, glorious:
the immigrants, the refugees, the peddlars, stockbrokers and janitors, stenographers and
cooks,
all of us making and unmaking ourselves,
hurrying forwards, toward who we'll become, one way only, one life only:
free in time but not from it,
here in the city the living make together, and make and unmake over and over
Quick, quick, ask heaven of it, of every mortal relation,
feeling that is fleeing,
for what would the heart be without a heaven to set it on?
I can't help thinking no word will ever be as full of life as this world,
I can't help thinking of thanks.

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