

rubato

nathalie stephens

Le texte de nathalie stephens, intitulé rubato, traduit un tempo flexible, ce qui est particulièrement approprié dans l'environnement du texte de stephens, qui exige justement un tempo flexible, le rythme du corps, qui tombe à la manière du menton s'enfonçant dans la poitrine, les bras formant des cercles dans l'air, les genoux se bloquant, au-delà du seuil et dans l'espace qui sépare l'ici de l'au-delà. Le corps doit négocier sa relation à la fois au langage et à la musique, alors qu'il se berce entre les mots qui s'empalent. Chanter, le corps doit chanter. La capacité de survivre aux mots qui s'empalent constitue une promesse portée par le talon-aiguille qui se manifeste à la manière d'un bleu moucheté, qui n'est pas logé en un lieu précis.

1.

At the foot of a deep stairwell a door. Beyond it the piano and a dark room. Dark enough to fall into, feet tumbling, chin stabbing chest, arms cutting circles into the air, knees locking, over the threshold and into the space from here to there. Here, where the body breaks into slabs of noise, balancing the weight of limbs lifted and thrown. The mind spins, spinning words, spinning noise, catches the pulse and the agony, rhythmic and dissonant in a dark room, across a threshold, the place just out of reach, where the piano stands. Through a door and into the noise. There, the reach collapsed, stacked, arms pushing through glass, skin fraying shards of light, bloody and cold, mouth agape, a whisper torn slowly from inside, rasping tongue and tooth. A wheeze held up like a prism, catches the glint of metal, rung upon rung, slamming, reverberant.

2.

Closer. One arm raised, the other holding on to pictures.

3.

An opening in the floor and the pull downward, or a fall. The body bends, the mind buckles, frantic and mute. Absurd. The word is absurd,

gasps, flails and chokes. The body convulses and pukes, bilious and sullen.

4.

The piano groans. Frédéric loved George, héroïque, and died. An opiate, an opiate! Arms flung open, the blood curdles, the face is awash with pallor, the light stabs holes in the darkness and swells. A dance. Yes, a dance. Roads widen, the sky drops against the earth, heaving, satiate. No more, no more.

5.

A small village on the edge of a city. Black rain on the dry, sulking earth.

6.

A voice mangles the space from here to there. The body folds itself into a small flat square, unobtrusive, a chequered floor tile hammered into the dirt, fissured beneath the weight of heavy boots, the stomp of heels, an intruder, an avid listener, a friend. Over here, I'm over here. Sickly and weak, a question unfurled, and the stench, oh the stench, twisted, like vines inching toward light, boring holes into brick, reaching, stretching over and beyond, the edge scratchy and raw beneath moss (in the dark damp places where moss grows replete), a windowsill or a precipice, sun-gorged and still. Febrile, the anticipated strain.

7.

A musical mind. Cogs lock. Wheels grind. The body rocks back and forth between impaling words. Sing, the body must sing. A promise carried in the heel of the shoe like a pebble, unlodged, bruising.