

MINGPEI LI

Drop Coalescence

A drop falls onto a bath of the same liquid.
It & the bath of itself rest at different
temperatures, and it does not fall into, it floats
and does not coalesce. (For reference,
think, cream on coffee, though strictly speaking,
that is not what the fluid mechanicians studied.)

What they said was, where there is contact,
things rapidly change: circular reshufflings of hot rises,
cold sinks. On a sea, we would call it weather.
Here, before the drop & itself rush into
each other, it pressures aloft, a straining escape
from itself, a moment at peace

with the delicacy of illusion. Moments are
short, solid as rust. They said, suppose we construct
a drop that could cool itself. (For reference,
compare, a tiny refrigerant heart inside a tear, though
broadly speaking, no one has studied this.) If we succeed,
the drop levitates in infinity. If a quicksilver breath

perishes from you as to be not you, do we get a kind of forever,
a suspension what we wouldn't give
to be in? Let respiration hurry, but let the drop never
drop into itself. (Yes: and if it disappears
into itself? If it falls into a bath of something
not itself, makes it rich, makes it wetter?)

What I'm saying is, we are bodies on which
forces act, that is nearly all we are, you & me
& everyone we've ever loved, no less
those we haven't seen in what they move, they still apply
themselves to us. Was there a time since
you slid into this world that you haven't known this?