

CYNTHIA DEWI OKA

The American Dream Writes to Orpheus

My love,

The tide is poised. Between you and I the end of the world

where an abandoned crane will either spit blue
blazing desert from its graffiti lips or smash
the crow-bedecked tenements in search of a trumpet.

I am somewhere the horizon is slippery, quartered;
a compost of insurrections mirroring the body.
I am somewhere famished for a bare face.

The Hellfire travels 995 miles per hour. Where it lands, soul
is freed like fire through skin, touching dirt for the first time.

A maggot's labor, like yours, is apostolic.

I'd like to tell you I've learned something of patience. Watching for
birds in the flash of windows beneath the eyelids, the wrist
in darkening sand. Are we really that different?

I am somewhere the shards of a wine jar,
the coal on a mother's brow.
I am somewhere deafened by wings.

You believe no shadow is lost, ever only searching
for sound. Each continent begins with a cloud and is forever

caesura. But have you felt kingdoms roll below you,
your back the red sun in that gloaming hour
when all the world's desire closes upon you?

Forgive me. Such a thin and treacherous margin
this drinking, singing river of heads,

this dying, singing river of breath.