

MATTHEW LANDRUM

Polychronicon

Night subducts the living city. Smoke hangs
frozen above factory buildings, saffron pilings
on the skyline. Here is the hour of your sleeping
in another room while I watch traffic thin

on the street below. Even in love, the thread
of desire weaves possibility into abstraction,
and buttocks, arms, breasts, and thighs become
conceptual. The city taught me not to trust

the immediately beautiful, but to ravel out
revelation. I know the patterns of streetlights
like I know your breathing, that when I come
to lie beside you, you will stir but not wake.

What is this rarified metropolis? The window
half shows the outside, half reflects the inner
room. The image of books and lamps imposes
itself on the passing cars. Here is the act

of worship, the mind caught between thought
and the actual, body overridden with desire
until skin won't sate. Here is the benediction
over house and street: the smoke that remembers.