

TONY BRINKLEY
from *Saccades*, a sequence

Partly erased, my
moonscaped skin,

adjacent to a field
of flame, the sound

eating its own
like rustling silk.



Private placed in public eyes constructing my femininity—
there is a code, but what, coded, might be then an end cause
or a first cause, lensed or not, too or not sufficiently slippery

—I still love my domesticity, which includes my washing up,
scrubbed now and cleaned, my or your shower, the many
water drops among the public spheres. Us—like our mothers

—thoughts are clothes for us, they come in sacks, patched
bed draggings, my long dress, my necessary waist-exposed
stitch, my lost place. Where is spaced for you—sentenced lines,

our gerunds, being visually put together, cut out seamed stress.
And tracing a thread, knots, cuts not meaning anything by
that—silked, labored cotton, while can and could stand out.



Retinal screening, surfaces receding inward at light speed, a cat
within with three mice at the entrance of the eye—the retinal claws
withdrawn into the pupils, velvet dark, the three discarded witnesses.

Perhaps a cat within your eye was also sleeping, undisturbed, a retinal pause
and a slight purr of seeing: here like Moses, chronicling silence. Tear as
you will—he will, they will—in between as willed—accumulating discards,

listen carefully—but not seeing, hearing the silk rustling, but not breathing,
the ground swelling—if you could close your eyes and did not tear the hands
that feed you—three mice playing . . . here like Moses, chronicling quiet.



Your eye claws tear my hand because
I reach to touch what you are seeing—

from the skin my fluid sensing
in your hands a way of reading.



The important characters are yours, stepping
into fashion, made-up, rouged, in your dressing-

gowns—let in after clearing the streets and
opening the walks to others, before the display

windows, in which to see almost any of us,
street-workers, strollers in pinks and violets.



The air in air before
anticipates a brilliant

star, lit from a blessed
tree enclosed in glass.

As if it were a brilliant
star, a lamp or, given

oil to light the star, the
iridescence, we should

not be blamed if we
invite in every eye

forbearance—or
else gradually reduce

the distance for the
promised messenger.



In Gomorrah your mother
protects you from angels,

the posts of her bed are
crocodile teeth. I teach

you the game of holding
your breath—breathe in,

you are gone—breathe
out, I am there. You

practice the magic that
hides in the dark and

hide in the sheets that
protect you from fire.

In Gomorrah your mother
protects you from angels.