

A Taut River

Richard Coleman

we spoke of gales, torrents, the careening
nature of romantic interests
pine resin scents heavy and weighted above
the sloped couch
the hillside above the sea.
in couples we exchanged
how to love and win
and win
never losing one's grip on what was
tactical, strategic
adept at the hidden hand
the sun
one observer among others
the jackal
poised above the bared peak
calling out to the maimed hunt
and we
eyeing one another through the brazier's
spitting coal
for wounds, rapid pulse
faint heart.
the mistress pulling the anemone close to her breast
her whose hands were always open
speaking in tongues
with no mention of the sting
its poisoned grasp
the mindless feeding, she saying
that it is only a flower
harmless against flesh
in which the river runs its course
its white eyes chanting
the racing thrust of water, the heave
of water, the deep pool.