

Jennifer Wolfe

Ground Zero

All night you have been telling me
what will happen later
thinking to make me impatient
staring into my eyes
as if you have never seen eyes
and it works, I am impatient
until now, watching this couple
she is achingly pretty
in a tight dress
and shiny stockings, shoes
kicked off, hiding in a corner
he is wearing blue jeans
and a prep school tee
They have got each other
by the hips, rocking back
and forth in a ritual
Her head is thrown back, eyes closed
and she is laughing
her laughter drains me
so I turn around
I say, let's go
let's go back to my place
let's get this over with.

The White Temple

Our meeting was planned
five thousand years ago
laid brick upon brick by
slaves sitting on the banks
of the Euphrates
weaving the elaborate
labyrinth around a core

not even the architect
could find the infant
sacrificed for the cornerstone
the cattle horns buried
in the foundations
icons of birth and sex
and death hidden in the mosaics
patterned on the passage walls.

We run through history,
animal husbandry, Egyptian queens,
dense stifling cities, steamy
August nights spent in smoky rooms,
loneliness eating through the urban rhythms
and we collide in the innermost room

both of us knowing, even as you
pull my head back by the hair,
exposing my throat to your obsidian,
that the slaves
are filling in the labyrinth.