

Karin Cotterman

Lines

The beautiful lines in your face,
all I can do is not to reach out
to touch
them, suddenly in the middle of your speech.
So instead I notice the slight
curl at the nape of your neck,
the drawl that slips into words
when you don't pay attention,
and the smooth steadfastness
of your forearm's hair.

These things have provoked me
to appear here today,
offering up in a firmly timid
manner my honesty at being
intrigued by suddenly
tasting a slight accessibility
to understanding the fragile inside
that your cynicism tries to protect.
Most definitely I am aware
of a grumbling in my stomach.

I take notice of properly placed
sinews that make
me gasp at the concept of
with. It seems
obscenely obvious
to me that I am here
simply to view you.
Since I am not frail
I always feel
obscenely obvious.

My words are brittle as
they fall out of my mouth
and shatter on the table,
sending echoes throughout
the restaurant, then
your words are falling
under the table, muffled
by large feet underneath.

You still do not know that
I think of you when I look
at the stars.
Perhaps someday soon I will
be strong enough to tell you
that there are stars in
your eyes and the story in
the lines around your mouth
takes my mind places
I do not will it to go,
so that when you speak to me
I sometimes wonder what words
you are saying
because I can't hear
over the dissonance of your
smile and the trembling of my hands.