

UPON A SUNKEN CHANDELIER

*Joseph Reiter*

Undreamt epochs zooming  
bait for gods supping human  
sediment, what mass must have meant—I never  
made it

passed age-dusted surfaces, sounds move  
across like over water,  
pliant veined currents  
submerged masts  
foolish tales of labyrinths  
to mythologize the cycles in which we drown ourselves  
coughing up whirlpools  
and geometric  
gazes, headaches.

When the light comes on and cool,  
visible are youth crawling across a concrete wall  
muffled colors of every spray and idiom,  
fists balled around wood handles—  
sledges, picks and chisels.

Tragic or comic, the ancients weren't  
built to last neither like these bodies  
blurred into motion. You've felt  
the weight of the hammer, think of how  
it struck. Was it solid and confident?  
Tentative and poorly timed?  
Were you lackadaisical, were you  
not desperate? How did it bounce, did it  
ricochet into the light?

Technology needs access to  
nostalgia to appeal to viscera,  
interiors never meant for the light of day or night—  
vertebrae to verdigris—  
find a way to fulfill desire, endeavor curiosity.

Oily lenses never affix or repair  
though cells retire we leave  
lonesome undeveloped plasticky colors  
brittle little lost pauses  
expecting divine praise  
waiting for the cut,

the haze rolling for the wow and flutter  
 of tumbling dice that never  
 come to rest— the artist's hands sinking  
 into the throbbing pigment.

Relic marquees and lit boxes of  
 dead-end text raised in silence,  
 does the neon sheen help you drift  
 into another derelict sleep?  
 A taxi stops in the glow of its own dome,  
 threadbare midnight jockey,  
 how many of us can fit  
 from then til now?  
 what's the price? Get in.

Ratios unforgiving,  
 looping fast enough  
 to not notice  
 the cracks and the freeze,  
 the decomposition  
 the urgency to kill ourselves over and over,  
 perpetual suicide in a chalky  
 oxidized mirror the frame  
 work falling  
 away see  
 ourselves  
 there into the  
 flickering illusion  
 of stability, succession of fences  
 razed and replaced.  
 You never come to rest anymore.

Suffused with the aroma of  
 singed dust upon a sunken  
 chandelier, a forgotten  
 tuxedo, in silence  
 and empty lust

every image gyrates so—  
 every glyph under the sun  
 under the red bulb  
 beneath the sweat and time  
 rushing to engorge  
 the heaving sentiment.