Periphery

David Marovich

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PERIPHERY

out here
it's too dark
to read signs
my singing
pounds the emptiness
my only company
a yelping steer
who doesn't read
newspapers
i can urinate freely

a half peach moon
swings over these
cowering farmlands
i can hear the slow boom
of the battlefields
no, the mines don't stop working
the earth gurgles
all night

even the stars are scratched
by my penstrokes

the war goes on
televisions perch
in treetops
vague beacons
to these quiet men
with sparks in their faces
who leap through cities
at midday
taking the afternoon
by surprise
roaring through playgrounds
blurring the shiny lips
of sweathing statues
with my eyes wide open

they move like trees
through the darkness

oh, they've forgotten someone
lying quietly
trading juices with the earth
ice
glitters in his ears

steel hammers
cracking my teeth

winter comes at last
snow
roars louder than cannon
i can walk through
the ruins
at noon
statues crumble
softly
behind me
dust on their cold lips
dust whispering down
the hot street
dust on the cheeks
of black children
their wrinkled legs
their bloated bellies
standing wide-eyed
with microphones
in their bleeding hands
looking back

TRISMUS

I wanted to write a poem this afternoon
about a soft gray light
                    on the polished
tabletop
about shadows with no edges
this cold appearing on the back
    of my hand
these quiet faces
            in the sky
that move
            vaguely
like
    the passing of afternoon
steel wires are being drawn
to be used as clocksprings from my stomach

the white punctures
faces of emptiness

my ears battle
the thrusting seconds
but nothing makes
a sound