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White: Gesture and Extremity Being Equal

GESTURE AND EXTREMITY BEING EQUAL

Laurie White

"We are conceived of your conceits"

— Wallace Stevens

Our interruptions happen often
as the house settles us
in and down into chair
cushions and breadbox

You holding a toothpick
to your teeth never reaching closer
or picking at thin rubles

A disconnected circuit will change your
grip to ice tray
and pressure toward garnish

stamping out small lit fires
in cameras, in door knockers—
the play of bronze and
flame, pleasure of barrels

Being allowed inside
when it's too humid outside to swallow

Marjoram on dished asparagus stalks
while moisture collects on an underpass and drips follow
drips on to a boater who
amid so much of it
could not tell whether it came up or fell down

You saw him find instead,
prism lengths taken to their distance

Your sterile butcher paper
cold and wound to countertop
an intimacy between the near-rancids
and rump roast
As you removed the tips of three fingers
on the block at a cleaver, hack
sent you blushing against the glass cabinet
left arm against bones of fish covered in chill
and the muscle of other red fleshes

Later you returned to us unmanaged
returned the hand to your coat pocket,
sateen against the diminished-to-joints

An evening needn't be so raveled or danced
only motionless you said

Later I caught you fiddling
with the hidden perforations in the jacket lining
making an illusion of your losses

Handing over the butcher's clock,
the floor full of trimmings and plush