

Wilderness House Literary Review 14/1

Nanette Rayman
the heart tats

If my body seems both supple and potential
now and again getting nothing you'd dreamed of does this—
I smoke, bedroom-faced, my heart an air raid,
all battings and panic, the fatal flaw that keeps you all away,
sadly away on the 6 train and the bookshop,
while the sun's lunge does nothing to skew the deck
of fate, the stroke of July, the sky spread limb-to-limb by gutting clouds
over city streets where I still search for a job. My busy body's lithe
as a ballerina, half on the sidewalk, half in the crook of a mugger's arm,
one bolt away from eating the scrim to the next world, as I did
once at nineteen. *So much beauty*, he'd leered, behind his Buick wheel, how
a starched nurse had to hold my hand for the pelvic, the stitches.
How many times I've told you it was a friend, a woman who told me
to get in his car—*he's cool*. Inside old grief, memory grouses, it expands galaxies.
Inside my sweet white white sundress, my heart tats and now and again is free.
So, darlings who look and then look away—subconsciously aware—of my play,
do not press me or collar me, enter through the porch door
with itinerary in-hand, how you plan to scale the highest lights,
seduce me now with cowboy feet, purple roses spotted with dew
while I slip quietly out of my dress, ligature dog-gone.