Stephen Mead **Somniloquy**

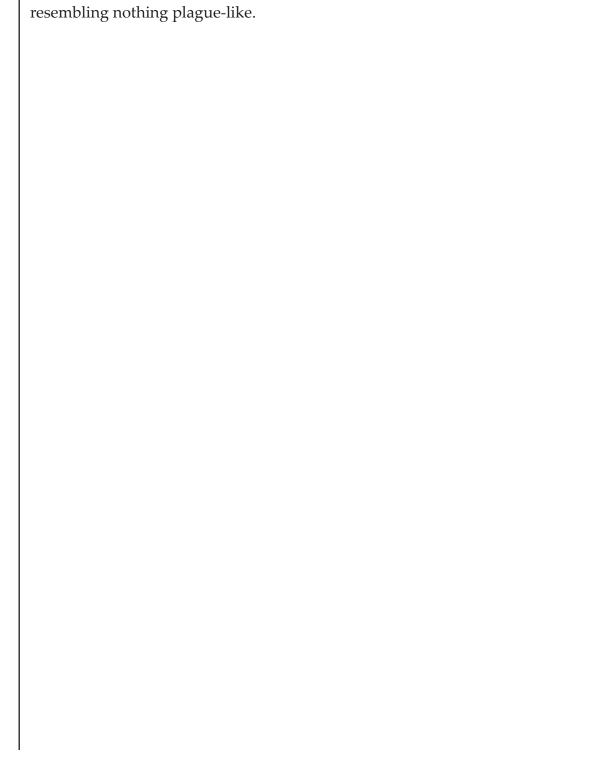
Sleep talk, memory-deep,
Mom is not happy
about being photographed
in her cotton blue housework shirt,
cuffs rolled above the wrists
for her paraffin hands,
one with a sponge, sudsy enough,
against the red of the picnic table,
freshly-stained or fading to grains,
the original wood, its damp hint
of moss

calling to the distant green of that tree line, its Spruce-busy brush rising to a sky, enough see-through blue or robin's egg, with picture postcard clouds lowering white over the chalk-gray gravel drive

rounding the perfect triangle lawn, its apex-tip, and the Catalpa's ancient good girth, its hodgepodge of softness here, roughness there, parts of bark, rivulet-cracking for ants at their business bringing a grip of limbs up and up to the spade-shaped leaves, their lime hue felt-soft, amid a sea of bean pods, the miniature ruffles of blossoms and amber locust shells.

One iridescent with wings is breaking through still,

a rainbow at birth



Curtained

Paintings, the gold robes which veil approach of both image & viewer framed by life's protective shrine of durable frailty waiting to meet each other's story like

a train whistle on wind, the steam, the chuff & clank bearing cinema messages, voyages as fate, where engines are

needle eyes & tracks part the landscape same as hands

pulling back these beckoning cloth rivers, these travelogues

behind drapes.

Bricks, Light

Warm yourself here.
Press hands to orange, topaz, rust red...

Blood is booming to the bloom of this light, these squares mortar seals the roughness of in dust & in crumbling, the promise of flame, a place to touch clay, pigment, the cold itself thermal & shaped maybe for a window,

the sky clouding its blue puffs against such space for squirrel play & the flight of birds...

Each flock passes to emptiness & the stones stand, the rectangles resume order, the grace of this radiance your head rests against, huddled

in the frozen, each eye itself, closed, compressed, soul-yellow stirring...

as though around a barrel:

How you move us there against the bricks where you do not stir at all.