

Marie-Lynn Hammond

"Japanese"

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something about you I realize
Japanese, Japanese
not your hair or your cheekbones or your blue eyes
none of these, Japanese
but some kind of stillness at the core
a mask that tells a story but hides much more
Japanese

the way you fold our bodies together
origami
light as paper or a feather
floating from me
now we are two white cranes
in an ink-black sky
embracing in silence
as they fly
Japanese

your little house floats in the island mist
self-contained, serene
time opens like a fan with a flick of your wrist
there we are in the painted scene
have we not been here forever
taking tea in the garden green
tea in the garden green

you speak in haiku
when you speak at all
Japanese
spare with the words
careful how they fall
Japanese

crimson lily caught
in a porcelain bowl
the tiger of passion
in the net of control

and even though we are only starting
I can see now how will be the parting
smiling and bowing, no tears please

Japanese

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