

RACHEL ELIZA GRIFFITHS  
MY DRESS HANGS THERE

A woman pulls night over her hips & makes the bleak seams blur the faith of her legs. If she names blood she will exist. The woman called Memory will have enough to wear in a room glazed with silk & flames. I hang my flesh on the French door as her light shakes my hunger into sequins. I'm small & scratch her heels. History stalks my body, examines my teeth, my scalp & thighs. What can I bear for the narrative? The auction? The fondled hips of an alphabet switch partners inside a score I won't follow. My dance card filled before my birth. Will I scale my story? In the middle of a city I am between years of ruin. My eyes walk the street below while my shadow dangles between the Hotel of Impossible and the Hotel of Mocking Words. There is my tongue near the curb where a woman's shadow is feeding a songbird. There are the curling night scrolls of my hair. The feathers I once wore at my ears pause midair as if listening. A tomcat swaggers past a storefront holding a piece of my cheek in its mouth. It's early & the workmen whistle, coaxing sunlight from their pitches of tar. The men look up at the world & hold the sky by its own throat. They beg the dawn to leap over night's skull. *Dream me a woman*, they say to Memory. Above, the other woman who is History never kneels in the sightless canals of pleasure. She will never eat bribes or pay twice for her mistakes or affairs. The hearts she buries are anonymous & she gathers them against their will. This woman can have any life she wants. Any defeat. *Do you want my life*, I say. My voice is a gold streetlamp corroded by ghost moths. The victory is always the same. Across the room I watch the moonlight flicker in her unlit breasts. *Beg me to take your life away*. *Beg for me like a man*, she says. The height of desire as it falls to day.

(Mexico City, 2010)