

Jonathan Chan

rush

to be made more of oneself, that is
to be made more of another: the daily

slipstream, drawn to half-complete
promises of syntactic order, wider

berths, the urge to drown in all that is
inhaled, to find an intersection a

crux, always sifting – a line read, an
evening filed, a spoonful swallowed, the

fingers always threading, the unformed
paragon, previously unfathomable, the

wonder of the next day and the next, the
apex of sameness, the ancient anchorage,

the lungs stretched unto ecstasy, until
the body, silenced, deflates.

hornbill

sits, talons wrapped on metal railing,
dark plume cascading, furled over
splashes of white. gazing, eyes
sprightly, twitching, hearing the
piercing shrill of a koel's call, or
the scatter of a flock of mynahs, or
the coo of orioles. hornbill rests
its heavy beak, casque on mandible,
protrusion too hefty for a song. the
tip of its beak turns, smooth through
the grilles, crushing the wing of a
pet bird, mangled and swallowed.
it sits, resting before the inevitable
leap and soar, quietude breathing
in a crutch of blood.

char siew fan

pierced on a spit, turned on a
fiery axis, hung to drip and dry,
on these streets, a bevy of ruby
slices, flesh across fluffy grains,
fibrous stem and fried egg for
comfort. mm goi for each
shoveling with chopsticks, the
same sudden longing

found in colder streets, across
from solemn gates and the pallor
of a cavernous chapel, a quiet
node, amidst hushed chatter of
cooked books, my order comes:
flesh dyed red, laid beside drier
grains, and yet, plate full, i take my
refuge from december winds, peering
out at the passing bicycles, wheels
on cobblestone, just enough to

remember: gravy slathered over
a hot dish, masking the charred
crust, fit for an afternoon after
school, or the blackened exterior
brought in southward moves,
cluster of sweetness, salt, mouth
coated with fat, or the quiet edge
against my palate, glaze resolved
into a crunch, the familiar taste of
there and of here.