

from Juked #7, Spring 2010

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HOMAGE TO CESAR VALLEJO

You will not die in Paris, in a thunderstorm
or under an umbrella in Miami, your skin turning
luminous as a mule's ear at the end of summer.
You will die in Lubbock, Texas, with a sneeze.

A wind carrying the tinny obligato of an ice cream truck
will blow the olive leaves a sudden white,
the color of plaster saints whose wise,
sincere shadows once moved us.

Bach will still move you.
You'll wish in the name of sweet leaping Christ you could hear the
Chaconne again.
You'll ask for sheet music and a violin from the circus master
who is leading a menagerie of buffalo, panthers, and swans
to the town fountain for a drink.

When you die you'll want to taste something cold.
More than human company, more than the five-act tragedy you
always meant to write,
you'll want a popsicle.
A monkey in a sequined vest and red velvet fez
will offer you a flask of schnapps, or is it
too late for that.

You will sneeze and see your shadow thin against the blank wall.
Unlike the moon, you can't fake death.
You'll stay here without music, loving the orange
split open on the sidewalk,
pouring out its diatribe of ants.