

EMMY HUNTER

The Moment of Exchange

The Hindu's story seemed fake.
India, thieves,
The terrible fate.

I was counting my bags.
The train was coming.

Something like this
Had happened.

Continually Approaching Mount Fuji

The toilet is heated.
The floor is freezing.
I've put on the wrong slippers.

I pretend to be this traveler

In the midst of gongs and delicate lanterns on fire.

But then it's the day of the next ceremony.

And there are Starbucks; but they aren't.
I can't recognize the chairs, the cake, a man with a face like a pond.

It's a matter of paths and landmarks.
I find the last kiln.
The clerks I will later annoy with my wrong behavior
Can't explain these glazed crackers they unwrap with reverence.
Maybe, I think, the crackers have no meaning
But still infuse the culture, like the clear Buddha soup I sat on the floor and ate
In the famous temple
With the tasteless tofu
Or the barely discernible taste.

I finish the book.
It seems inconclusive.

I'm preparing.
The mugs are returned to the station.
The future could be these Brits discussing football.

A flickering outline recedes and comes back
In the film I saw thirty-one years ago.

We are dating this from the year the emperor ascended.

I was on the train. I looked up.
There was the mountain.

Bangkok

They made areas for us, with strings of dangling lights, breezes,
Away from the dark lanes, the smoking stalls, the stiff, thin fur of sick dogs.