

Y.C. Murphy



Late at Night, Knitting

In response to a poem by Philippe Jaccottet, where he writes:

It's easy to talk, and writing words on the page/ doesn't involve much risk as a general rule:/ you might as well be knitting late at night.

I am doing something useful with my hands,
in this room of full Odyssean light, knotting
cables with a fine point pen, words and feathers,
ink blobs, sequined stitches to make literary
outfits, articulations of what I am unable to say.
This is my work, plaiting together a vernacular
from dissonant strands, interlocking words
and passions, adding myself to the tarantara
of the world. A tired motif, I'm a Penelope
buying time, twined in a long series of purple loops
that sew and mesh my grief into an inconsolable
silence. Someday I believe that what I think
will rise out of this apartment, these days of threading
metaphor through the needle's static eye.
In the meantime, I won't unravel my handiwork—rather,
save it to files in the crannies of a computer.
All these booties, alliterative buntings, scarves,
sweaters of indignation and longing, poems
that honor life, written to speak, which is, to connect.

