

Scott Penney

End Here

Finally the fall arrives in more than in name,
the air chilly, the day wet, rain dripping from the eaves,
the summer vapors blown away. Leaves on the lawn,
their dampness plastering them to the windshield,
as the bright red of the sumac among the maples,
deceives us with the promise of oriental spices and color,
of schooners aloft, cannons blazing against Caribbean pirates,
of the newly forged chains rattling below the deck,
the forequarters empty, Boreas filling the crisp lateen sails,
no sight of land yet, the turbulence of sub-tropical waters
matching that of wind propelling this barely seaworthy craft
from cabins and chimneys, from all the glowing fireplaces
of colonials on this most august and calm of side-streets,
in whose cupboard lies a biscuit-tin decorated with cat-folk,
the cat mother bonneted, her arms wrapped in a shawl,
her cabin behind her, no mouse-folk in sight,
not today, not ever. When did the Tom part from her,
all her brood swaddled in rocking cradles and bassinets,
rumor telling us of the ship making its destination,
among bazaars or spice hills, of red chilies the sumac evokes
until a funerary whiff of mold and ashes inches into the house
we inhabit as we do our own minds and the things inside them.