



Cesar Love

Two Poems After Li Po

Night Visitor

Frost on the sidewalk, frost on the fire hydrant, frost on my sleeping bag
I reach to touch autumn's ice but realize it is moonlight

I greet the familiar lamp who hovers above the street sign
She exchanges my sadness with thoughts of home

Jade Steps Lament

on the balcony
I waited

it was very late
when I removed my heels
to descend the jade staircase
or maybe it was very early
as my silk stockings
became soaked with dew

I retreated to my chamber
curled behind the beaded curtain
there the autumn Moon
found me
and showed me
the snowmelt of persimmons

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In Search of Li Po

you wrote many poems
of far-away friends.
I like to imagine
I am one of them.

when you travel,
the two of us
mail each other poems.
when you are in town,
the two of us are raucous poets
in the tavern.
we order rounds.
we curse the hack writers
who get government jobs.
we stagger to the street
and toast the moon.

I do not read your language.
translations of your poems
leave me thirsty
leave me lonely.
what I seek in them
I do not find.
like you, my friend,
whom I long to chance upon
at the corner bar.

your poems are a jug of wine
that I cannot unseal.
promise me a corkscrew, my friend.
toss it to me over the ocean.

Cesar Love is a Latinx poet influenced by Asian masters. He is the author of two books of poetry, *While Bees Sleep* and *Birthright*. He is also a co-editor of the *Haight Ashbury Literary Journal*.