

Eleanor Lerman

MODELS OF PASSION AND PAIN

In the morning, blue clouds ink the sky
like stained thumbs, pressing down
And the buildings lean down like giants
in steel kimonos, with cut-throat eyes
This is the headache world, the other world
that no one believed in. But I get the message:

Hello traveler. It is now

Who knew? That time, too, leans down
imposing pressure that has no mind behind it
No god, aslant, asleep upon a plinth is
dreaming this. Who knew? That we
would have to make up a reason why,
in fact, we wanted a little more time

So do it now. Quicky. Run

Or not. My new plan it to make a
parable of the old days when we went
with mama to the roof: when someone's
shirt might break free and fly off into the
good tomorrow. Someone's shirt might be
a white sail, waving good-bye

And still there would be men in the subways,
men in the factories, men as the models of
passion and pain. Now I remember that
I meant to marry someone. Slip into
someone's heart. Stay safe

But out here on the edge, I suppose I can
claim anything: *I didn't hear the phone ring*
There was a fire. Or tell the truth: until recently,
I was an idiot. I thought the sky meant nothing
and that if you walked lightly upon the ground,
no one heard