Matthew Van Praagh

Watching Myself Shower through Eyes Not My Own
Matthew Van Praagh

I.

Grease decorates the string-shaped strands
delicately curved around his fingers,
clinging to its host body,
forcing ultimatums, seeping in

   consecutive

Barred soap enters his left hand, the one unoccupied,
   balloonlike, it floats to his temple,
collecting dirt and grime on its trek up
   then,

   the drop.

   Steam escapes from the curtain’s enclosure.
      It must be 80 degrees.
      (Celsius, feel free to translate)

His skin must be sautéed, ‘hot’ has connotations
    that can’t describe

    the pain,
    the pleasure,
    the sexed appeal,
    the starving-of-reliefness,

    of the situation at hand.
II.

He’s arching again:
back slouched, arms perpendicular,
The warm pitter-patter:
is it him or is it his prey?

Absent, he lingers
two inches from the bathroom door
that isn’t his own.
two inches
between his fangs
and the rotten meat all too surely
eager to stain,
to blunt those jagged whites.

Dickies trousers cuddle his ankles,
as the shower steam massages his nipples.
A crack in the door
is all that remains.

Even from 300 meters away,
I can hear him.
His lack of secrecy is
charming
almost like he wants to get caught,
like he wants to feel cold metal on his wrists,
like being subdued was always the goal.

I’m thankful for the binoculars that I hold.
This man is the greatest entertainment
one could have.
III.

I don’t know what’s wrong with him.
Nightly, he stares through that window.
My clothes are off, my spirits are high
but high they’ll have to hang.

His fingers contort to dastardly shapes
when they hold those binoculars:
shapes I’d never seen when they
used to trace my skin.

I want to grab a sledgehammer,
and take it to the salient glass of
those binoculars: I want to
break his immersion.

What was he watching?
Well, what could he be watching?
Why can’t I ask him?
When should I ask him?
When have I ever before seen
him lick his lips like that?

When can I build the courage to shut those blinds,
shove him off that stool he uses to stalk,
and use him as my throne?

I deserve better.