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Untitled

Mai-Kim Dang

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Untitled

Cover Page Footnote

In 2010, poet Mai-Kim Dang was awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student Program scholarship to Ethiopia to conduct research in film and digital media.

Untitled

By Mai-Kim Dang

Love I imagined it was sitting there by your tax papers, your clear vase without flowers on your kitchen table. I came in sort of confident. This is the thing that I have believed in since I was a child. Embracing you, as close as I can get to the feeling inside of your. Mother sang me a song: it came out of her throat truthfully, beautifully. Father was at ease with other people and giving: hand to hand, his free labor at times, though he said my mother did not understand. Love it is all I knew of god for so long. And loving you was part of this certainty, a part of the bits and pieces of the universe. I step into the universe, under the cable car that's moving. I look up and think, and think, and hope, and cry, and feel something I have no words for. But it's in the land of me, there: born when I do not know!

And I am a person and you treat me like a thing. Wherever we are I am this thing to you. Love it rose up and walked out of the room, it took your 5'9" foot body with it, and I did not treat you like a man I know. And it was always like that, one or the other not present.

God you know the date, the timeline perfectly. An alleyway between homes that looked bloated and obese with extravagance. And I did not envy it—only wanted to go to the clearing where we could watch the frozen lake. Footprints were on the ice, lovers, traveling lovers—intuition tells me things at certain moments of my life. It is another reality of a woman's. I breathed in the air, cold, whipping our asses, and it took me back to the first creation. The first color combination of eyes and skin, the first luscious kiss, the first abuse . . .

"You shook" in the cold weather, you didn't see my god, you didn't see my happiness, you didn't see me loving you and the earth both deeply there, then. I felt like a lost chain, so far from the beginning good. So far from mankind that was open and ready to accept. No philosophy, to hell with theory and analysis, it was poetry then. God sweeping us into his dream. I am real as long as he is dreaming.

I left you with a message over the telephone, and as I called I spoke to god. I felt weak but on fire. God warns us about the fire, cautions us to cool down our fires. With every mistake I say god you are always right, let me not walk on that other side again.

And though I was certain that god did not speak to me when I loved you, he did as he always does because I poured the water of the lake over my bare knees and aging hands, the sunlight burned the shadows to warm this thin body of a person, and I felt better, and I was better. Love it was all that I ever had to get to anyone, the only door I knew how to open by tricks, and wit, and magic, and certainty. I lose you. I lose it: the drench, the ache, the gift of closeness.