

The Magnificent Culture of Myopia

surfaced in trigonometry; it was
the first time I swore
there was no such thing as *parabola*,
no such thing as *abscissa*:

I never saw them.

Chalk in Mr. Ansari's hand
became a magnificent sixth finger, whiter
than anything else about him, whiter than
his profession, his lab coat with *mathematician*
stitched in a roller coaster, an harmonics
of loud letters on his back; even his eyes
(he came close to pass back failure)

were written on, red subscripts
and infinitesimal exponents surrounding
centers dark with explosions of visions
of what could be found only in numbers

He wrote invisibly
on the board, his hand moving along
black expanse like a wave from a baby
ocean and all he did was bless it, caress it,
cast spells against his tests; his name *Ahmed*
Said meaning *God's gift to women* according
to the gestured loops like wedding rings.
Rumor was he never married.

Although he was available
for conferences, I never saw clearly what he wanted,
integers didn't resolve; until I got my glasses
his corrections were too familiar with my face,
exams brushed my mouth as if to blot
excess lip gloss. From my back row desk

where birds sang me answers through
glass written on with reflection
better than the board was written on, he looked
as unreal as irrational numbers and absurd roots
he introduced

in lessons I thought were about chromosomes
and sexist destiny: everything plotted

on x and y axes
although he insisted nothing was absolute
and constantly shifted values.

Same year at home
I had to get close to a boyfriend
to see faint lines of bar code in his lips
and had to scan his mouth to solve something
meant to be nebulous, the way it was

in church where I couldn't see him
well; he was as shadowy as faith, his edges as unsure
and in that uncertainty, became soft,
blurred, compassionate, betraying the fraying
that betrays good use: a fog in rags
from so much encompassing things
in a somewhat silvery carriage. And now

without my glasses
every night in bed with him, he ceases
to bald; I see no razed patches of scalp, just hazed
perimeter, a fuzziness as if he's regrowing hair,
as if he and the room, our whole house of sons, drums,
saxophones, keyboards, replicas of hippos, and canaries
are now beneficiaries of peaches, heirs of fuzz,
scant fur of beginner mold about to bless
bread with blue beards—and we're

about wearing such raiment—we're named
for this just slightly less than magnificent effect
—even rocks put on moss suggesting that anything

can become as soft as memory, distant recollection
growing sweeter with distance, so sweet
I taste (thinking of him and where love that grows leads)
peaches from an Eden just soft enough to be mirage
and every fata morgana.

It so happened that today a lens fell out of my glasses
so one eye strained against clarity, the other refused
to let things merge in blur the way they will have to
if brightness comes with the glare that seems angelic
as it provides light with circular wings; blur and no
distinction, no endings or beginnings, just that escape

from focus, all lines crooked, crinkled, wobbling

as if we're all old with unsteady gait and hands
experiencing *such shaking* when we try to grasp

a peach, *such shaking* as we realize the peach
is more powerful than we are: peach, sweet orb
the drupe of drupes
dangling from a branch on an earth
dangling in a galactic arm playing ball
with all the spheres, rotating them
all at once; the peach, is more powerful
than we are—o how we Methuselahs shake
from its magnetism, quake in its gravity,
faint from its taste

when we finally lift it *electrified* to our mouths,
its fuzz much more incredible than the start
of masculine puberty, for suggesting it might
be possible to invent a lamb when that means everything
we aren't, or at least possible to dress
the world as one: softly, softly; even weapons
appear softly, reveal their leniency
to magnificent myopia, softly

the lunatics respond, softly is the therapy
myopically beginning—perhaps it will last,
perhaps visual details softly dispersed
into static will hold, won't be repaired;
a big peach seen from afar is on my screen

when the cable's out dot matrices peach
when the cable's out I can appreciate molecules
watching the static I am grateful for atoms
watching the static can almost feel the fuzz

under the screen, touch the static, hear it
on the radio once out of clarity's range of belief

in comprehension—humble Blur,
I am indeed an admirer, for it is penitence
I see without my glasses.

—Thylias Moss