

Ode to the Oboe

wanderer of the horizon, gypsy, you beckon me, haunting as the cry of the night train, its  
echo in the distance

pilgrim, take me with you—

traipsing through endless city streets, bazaars, vagabond looking  
for the mandalas of woven rugs, the eyes in copper kettles

folk toys, cows with blue flanks, crimson hooves chassé and bow  
before they disappear into a satiny orange barn

scarves—chartreuse, electric lemon, magenta—stream from  
the sleeves of discarded theater costumes

prophet, impersonator intoning the wilderness, you scroll apocrypha—spindrift  
stars—into the labyrinth of my ear

jaguar sprints, chameleons zigzag branches, sepia on sepia, one  
lone duck traverses the river, seeking a mate

peonies, porcelain white, tremble, their throats hoarse from trying  
to sing to a world of sleepers

notes reverberate, waves in a shell, for you are the joker, the court  
jester, forever mimicking yourself

cross-dresser of the dark neck, enter—  
let me hear you—

wistful chanteuse, wanting to belong, born to play alone, sojourner endlessly searching  
for the chaste carnival, the Mardi Gras that hawks the holy grail