Fall 2001

daguerreotype of sleep

Mong Lan
daguerreotype of sleep

where there's sleep
   a cat cleaning herself
or an idea of one
thought enters the way
   a person enters

before a line of one-handed mercury i stand
wish the pages could be turned
leave it untempered
   its time has passed    its time passed

should i have stayed?
should've slept and laid my head on the table
   a thousand white dresses   a million soarings of the heron
the wing of an orchid on my plate
& then i thought of the ordinary life
a handprint something made something forced
something betrayed
on a mountain range of mid winter
a slaughter we’re sleeping
a shirt full of laughter

your future in space
& a line (it will not happen)
  a blue jay an odor
  i suppose tonight is the end
a word with you is a season entire

alone go to the mountains

in an awkwardness
  with no way out the spell of life
  take something a pill

we’re not sleeping our hands
wringing