

JACK MILLER

FEAST OF EXCITED INSECTS
I: SPRING'S FIRST THUNDER

"This is the time when, as the Chinese say, 'the dragon raises his head.' The lordly dragon goes into hibernation in September in the form of a tiny creature, and thus remains unobserved till he calls the insects to life. On the day of the 'Excited Insects' certain fetishes are displayed to placate them."

— *Chinese Creeds and Customs*

by Valentine Rodolphe Burkhardt

The bullroarer call: I know its wellspring,
and bear that dubious privilege
like a child born blind with flashlights
for fingers.

Fluids thaw to course
beneath chitinous shells,
a static of tiny heartbeats
mistaken for
a fervent whisper.

Academic the particular alchemy
of the dragon's waking yawn,
the prickly ionic unrest
that gathers

as you cleave the unanimous air
to reach for a coffee cup,
eddyng motes of dust in

carousel currents;
galvanic accretion

in the reproachful hush of a black dress
as you burrow deeper for warmth.
Then release: tectonic shifts
find voice in

the rustle of eye beneath lid,
and subterranean bruises
surface with a rumble
too low to hear
that rouses the swarms.