

*SUSAN MITCHELL*

Prelude 1

swish de la soie du soir

because it's fun to say because the words  
crinoline my mouth

some of the coral are not coral  
not fleur-de-lys  
not bits of chalice easily  
broken in the incoming acrophany

where huge upswells purple  
motion and the way mouth sucks in  
birthday with paper doilies

with clostre and claustrum stalk  
spicula all of it swaying  
on its invisible stem

o kiddy o blag job

such are the joys that etoile  
when the tides dentelle  
none of it fastened securely

to speak of love and forbid translation

bristle and barb and la parole catching  
at candles and candelabra  
the swung and streaming thrown open

long fluted in-drinkings and the onceness  
turning every fault  
and fracture every plump of the current

to flurry from fleur unda from undies

from this place others keep breaking off  
such as skydive  
to someone suddenly awake

### Prelude 3

From not having entered language, neither  
the doing nor the not doing, it  
has stayed open and variable as sky.

It has lubricity.

Also, a thick tangle, ancient and overgrown,  
with its own laws and customs, and even temple steps  
hidden and cracked by roots.

Its own cruelties and pleasures, the two perhaps  
not separable, but intertwined and necessary  
to each other.

The example of a banyan is of course a fiction.

I like walking around it, looking at it from all sides  
of its shadows and possibilities.

What happened and when, if anything  
really happened, does not matter.

With all the precision of a bird taking a seed  
from my hand and dreamily  
cracking it, I let the shell drop back, still  
moist from my tongue.

When I speak, there it is behind  
what I am saying, a place  
not meant to be entered, but only looked at.  
Like one of those architectural models

where a hint of the inside  
is given, a door slightly open, with its thread  
of light dangling over the threshold.

But not something to be grasped.

More of a swinging, urgent and painful,  
or urgent and pleasurable.