NATHANIEL MACKEY

Anaphylactic Aria

- "mu" ninety-seventh part-

The abandoned girl stood in line or went online, unclear which, the abandoned one we all had been or would be. "To've been so real and so soon over no joke," she kept repeating, a barracuda's hooked mouth, oracular, howling could a fish's mouth howl... Distant muse, distant music, distance muse and music, song heard from a distance whose words we barely made out. Skin came up, as did hair, draped interstice, hallowed backside, midriff, thigh... It wasn't music so much as what wasn't said we heard sung. Synaesthetic husk, curvature. Seen-said vesture. Redress... An odd song it was, all fret, fidget, the abandoned girl happy even so. We all were, we had phones we could talk to, abject tale again sweet in the telling, tale we dialed up, talk we called alchemy, ruse we resorted to ... We were lead and she was gold and vice versa, gold a low whisper, high wind, bent whisper, a siren gold almost was. The Insofar-I sound it was, hers if not ours, hers were it ours to say but she said otherwise... Stood in line or went online, she couldn't say which nor could we, bump run as one with beneficence, fuzz luminosity we'd heard about had come... The far sound was the one we listened for, not so much heard as heard of, solace up ahead or so it seemed or somewhat was, forever and again soon-come. We saw we'd stay extolling sonic rescue, sound we heard we'd hear. heard it say we saw

Less a netherworld than a nonworld the far wall she stood online at... Thread was on the box, all fidget, fret, a Hofriyati two-step, a hotfoot minuet... Death had caught her ear we saw, whispered it among ourselves, we the barracuda's mouth hooked again, choristers against our will... The abandoned girl made us wish we were young again. We dreamt of gold and a kind of grape we'd never seen before, everything in the dream the dreamer we'd heard, dream or no dream we'd heard... A seen-said refrain we couldn't hear kept at us, refrain she staked her story on, a reach we took it to be. Golden bones lay on each plate as we broke bread. These too we took to be a reach... Dreamt a dream kept at arm's length, dreamt it even so, dream dreamt pulled away from, the abandoned girl's abject wont. Everything seen the seer time was, recess turned inside

out

The abandoned girl had come aboard back when, thumbed a ride on the edge of the road, hopped in, wearied us with tales of disarray. Uninhabited angel all over again, we dared reflect, the story of the story our story, recess turned inside out it turned out... The abandoned girl demanded a name, laughed at each name we offered, the abandoned boy had done the same. An emotional abstract it appeared she set out to be or to arrive at, insisted he did too. What were we, she kept asking, band, clan, country, planet, Low Forest lunglessness, what, she kept insisting, she wanted to know... Absolute orphan all over again, we dared reflect. Made-up amends got us nowhere, we who'd have been hers had she asked... What we were we too wanted to know. Band, clan, country, planet, Low Forest lunglessness. Rub, anaesthetic refrain, blunt recurrence, costume exfoliant, fey distraint. The list, we insisted, went on... Rock chipped at we might've been, makebelieve lineage, no deep need to be there. Had the abandoned girl and the abandoned boy been twins we'd have passed out, each the other's asymptotic scout we saw they were... Yet to learn, as we were, death's lesson, deep inside identity's den, made-up descent, the abandoned girl sang abandonment, tight strings' tautolodic run, self-taught

Again we were in God-is-Gun country. The abandoned girl pointed out we were there. She'd woken up with the world in her face we were told, on a screen she'd seen crowds bombed and shot... Glass wall, glass transport it came to. The abandoned girl the abandoned boy, chemical stomach under it all, his her collapsing church first and forever, each the other's ricochet we heard, said we saw... Beadwork told and retold, thumbed rosary... Rubbed inner skin's antithesis. Sad animal caught up in thought

"Money talked and we watched," we were told. "Footless, we voted with our feet." Sought refuge in walking, she said, what there was of it, nothing otherwise the same ... Made a story what was attitude more than story, each the other's bias they'd have had it, each in the other's place... The abandoned girl the abandoned boy no longer... "Banal, sad to say but true," she said, the abandoned girl the abandoned girl again... All of which, we saw now, was only warmup, now brought abreast of itself abruptly gone again, never now enough, now remonstrant, now's new remonstrance cut... We too wanted to know what we were. Inert restraint, floating structure, floating structurelessness. Buoyage we were carried by... Cracked rib, chronic whistle, thumbed exit. We too wanted to know, insisted it. Eldren we might've been... All of which, we saw now, bought time, took its time. Nothing she could say said anything, sing though she did as though sing took say's place, say long ago let go... Sought solace, words' rapport cut loose, no solace, abandonment itself sang it seemed. Dropped opera, abandonment itself self-taught, sang to itself it seemed... Sang say's forfeiture, chorused against itself, the abandoned girl abandonment itself, self-serenade, we, we found, caroling as well

abandoned boy stood rib to rib debating whose hurt worse, in line or gone online, unclear which... Far rampart the wall they stood at, grown of late to become onward add-on, arithmetic salvo, ythmic fence... Asthmatic. Diaphragmatic... Of late budged inward as though a

The abandoned girl and the

brass quintet blew taps