

Passwords

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homesick

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homesick

Catherine Chiang

far away dreams of cloud-padded blankets
his sleepy heavy brown eyes, sheets white;
in the early morning, soft airy light
you snuck a kiss through my window
only for it to fall onto the worn carpet—

if no one receives your kiss does
it still say i miss you i love you i

does it?

maybe my memories of home: busy streets
wavering like mirages, are saving me from
this thirsty desert cloaked with the illusion
of an oasis, sands shifting like ocean waves

and i speak softly without conviction,
and my lips move without much sound,
but i have hidden a world of pulse and meaning
behind this thin veneer, consequences and feeling

now in this strange city, i think the imprint of
your lips has finally reached my skin but
is it too late? has your love reached an
expiration date? tell me, my dear, if i may
still grace your name with terms of affection

you played the game with me and i said
checkmate, i have your king in my sights.
months later, i now know you had your
queen one move from the vulnerable skin
of my neck, like when i let you kiss me there
and you bit me instead—you knew.

the floors at home are new and shiny
and traces of you are packed up in boxes
collecting dust; your regard for me collecting
ashes from the cremation of our past and
they have us packed up in an urn, tucked away

if no one receives my love, does
it still say please come back please come—

brush of his lips on the side of my face
and i remember you, and i feel nothing
and if i cannot feel, do i still—