Dreaming in the Teahouse of Infinite Light | Ryu Ando

i. Taking tea in silence

Who dreams the dreamer

dreaming of you
    in the garden?

  Who dreams the ouroboros

    warming in the sun

    watcher of the changing skies
    falling into cloud and
    shadow?

  Who thinks of thought itself

    in this glorious light

    a morning unfurled

    while water boils
    on the fire?

We are such stuff
    as dreams to the stars
are made of

we are told

*the end is the beginning*

*is the end*

and we are shown
to ourselves

in time

wander-lusting

in this empty house

looking for the infinite light

in narrow hallways

and dusty panels

sliding open doors

into new rooms

newly found

It is the looking back

that shows us what

is yet to arrive:

the stardust and the repulsion

the pulse of universal

attraction
pulling all your silence
to me

ii. A quality of density

Who dreams your soul aflame?

Hearth fires rise
on high
to the dark ceilings of the night
painted with the violent sighs
of dying stars

and new moons sink
into sleep

and more dreams
of heavy water

for dry wells
bathed in light

but only at the solstice
Dream not of fallen fruit
   nor the bitter lotus roots
e   deformed

   nor of dried twig and petal
   in that brittle cup you sip

Dream the impossible blue
   the untouchable sky

   its quality of density
   like the dust
   that coats a ruin

   or a spoonful
   of powdered tea

Ad astra per aspera
   they say

   the faint music
   of hidden suns

   the low hum
   of pale spheres
is too dim to hear
    too strong to ignore

iii. *ukigiri* | 浮霧

Who dreams the rose
    in the rainstorm

    the broken circles
    on the pond?

Who sees the garden walls

    the turquoise paint
    peeling in flakes

    the hemmed-in clouds
    hanging softly chilled
    above us?

The starlight shifts
    as mists suspended
    in the valley

    lift in strands
the slow sway of grass
    in the field

    the edge and bleed
    of a rain cloud’s
    passage

We hope to dream a place
    where certitude no longer
    keeps us small

    a place where satori

    悟
    り

    grows

    – through a thousand suns
    the mountains
    and the mud

    the weathered stones
    the gentle streams
the dusty panels
    and hanging scrolls –

and takes us past
    the edge of the night
    back into our opened eyes

[L.A./Saitama (March – April 2020)]